Social Media @ Global News Agencies:

News(s) Technology in a Professional Culture of Practice

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 2015

Abstract

This research contributes to the field of Journalism Studies and the evolving area of social media studies by empirically investigating the role of Twitter and Facebook in news production at global news agencies (GNAs) and their impact on GNA journalism. Research into the use of new networked and digital technologies in journalism has been growing but has yet to examine the arena of GNAs, which are a traditionally under-researched but hugely influential sector of the news industry. This thesis adds to a nascent body of research that takes social media seriously in journalism by analysing the interplay of the architecture and affordances of these technologies with the news production process. It does this through critical interrogation of changing organisational and individual work practices at the 'Big Three' GNAs, Agence France-Presse, Associated Press and Reuters, which have become a crucial site for research of the impact of widespread and growing use of social media. The research creates and uses the theoretical framework of cultures of practice to analyse how GNAs are integrating social media into their organisational infrastructure and how newsworkers are incorporating them into journalistic practice. The term cultures of practice is employed to highlight the importance of socio-material context for shaping journalists' work – taking account of how social and technological aspects of GNA infrastructure shape professional culture. Employing a qualitative multi-case study approach, the thesis combines interview analysis, framing analysis of social media guidelines, and analysis of organisational SNS activity to illuminate how social media are understood and employed at GNAs and the impact of their adoption for GNA journalism. The research finds that GNAs are 'social networking the news' and identifies a newly developed ethic of professional sociability, which is transforming GNA journalism and contributing to re-articulation of the GNA relationship with the public, business model, and role in the journalism ecology. It argues that professional cultures of practice is a valuable analytical lens for studying technological change in news production contexts as it enables effective study of the relationship between (social media) technology, (news production) practice and (GNA) culture. This study matters for what it indicates about how professional journalistic cultures transform in times of technological change through selectively co-opting practices, norms, and values while re-negotiating notions of professionalism.

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List of Abbreviations

AFP   –   Agence France-Presse

AP   –   Associated Press

GNA   –   Global News Agency

SNS   –   Social Network Site

- For Edna and Albert, Sam and Margaret

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to my supervisors Chris Frost and Rex Li for their help and guidance throughout the research process.

A special thank you to my parents, Chris and Maggy…

my sister, Rhia…

and Liam…

for being wonderful.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Researching Social Media @ Global News Agencies

1.1 Introduction

This thesis studies how social media technologies are being used for news production at global news agencies (GNAs) and the implications of this for GNA journalism. It develops and uses the theoretical framework of *cultures of practice* to analyse how GNAs are integrating social media into their organisational infrastructure and how newsworkers are incorporating them into journalistic practice. The term cultures of practice is employed to highlight the importance of socio-material context for shaping journalistic practice – taking account of how social and technological aspects of GNA infrastructure shape professional culture. The research spans a unique period in the development of social media in journalism - from 2009 when these technologies were becoming more widespread in everyday use and news organisations were experimenting with them to 2015 when they had become pervasive across the industry. It is a particularly important phase for GNAs as it covers the initial adoption of social media to their widespread establishment in news production, during which GNAs created Twitter and Facebook accounts and specialised guidelines for the first time.

There has been a steady rise in research into social media in journalism in the last decade but this thesis addresses an important gap in journalism studies by focusing on GNAs – influential organisations that have been continually marginalised in academic research. It also responds to a social media research agenda that is lacking contextualised case study analyses and work that aims to develop theoretical approaches to understanding social media in professional practice. Global news agencies are the most extensive purveyors of original international news in the journalism ecology and play a vital role in the exchange and syndication of news worldwide. They act as wholesalers to the retail news industry and have dominated in this area for a little over a century, earning their place as recognised leaders in breaking news and providing reliable, 'impartial' coverage of world affairs. This specialised role means their production practices and processes differ from other news organisations. In particular, they are driven by speed, with massive news production operations divided into separate text, photography and video divisions, which in their pursuit of up-to-the minute newsgathering and distribution,

often act autonomously (Paterson 2011b: 130-131). Though they each have their peculiarities, the three main GNAs - Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France-Presse – share similar fundamental goals, values, norms, practices and processes, forming a common professional culture that has become established and relatively stable over their long history (Boyd-Barrett 1980; 2010, Paterson 2006; 2011a). Investigating this GNA culture is vital for understanding the way much of the international news that circulates the globe in various media formats and languages, and on various platforms, is produced. But exploring it at this point in time is even more crucial. This is because the rapid rise of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, is fundamentally affecting journalism practice (Hermida 2013, Nel and Westlund 2013).

Social media are relatively new digital and networked connective services (van Dijck 2013) that have been at the forefront of a significant change in how people interact in everyday life. They provide particular techno-cultural conditions, which mediate and shape social action and interaction (Jones 2013, Langlois et al. 2009) and have had a notable impact on how journalism is practiced. Social media – variously described as technologies, businesses, services and sites – enable new types of audience and public interaction with journalism and journalists (and vice-versa). They have in some instances facilitated participation in news production and mass participation in public discourse more broadly, providing 'users' of these technologies with new means of expression and connection. Actions and practices supported by these technologies are transforming social life and altering the balance between personal/private space, public space, and corporate/commercial space. Through their socio-technical architectures, social media shape how users interact with each other. They have come to influence the dynamics of everyday life for many people and of working life for many journalists. In doing so they are impacting institutional/organisational structures and professional routines and practices. This has prompted established news organisations to renegotiate and reorganise their news production processes, and impelled newsworkers to open a dialogue about the underpinning culture from which their journalism is produced (Pavlik 2001; 2013). However, lack of research means it is not yet clear if these changes are occurring at GNAs.

One prevailing interpretation is that social media are having a democratising effect on journalism by engendering novel participatory types of journalism and facilitating direct interaction between journalists, political and cultural elites, and the public. The opposing view sees transformation of the political economy of the news media environment with an extension of traditional, elitist news organisations' influence into private and public life and a degradation of journalistic values. What is certain is that

empirical research is needed in this fast-changing landscape in order to describe, analyse, and explain change across the field of journalism and contribute to the development of new and pertinent theory. By examining social media at GNAs through the vantage point of cultures of practice, changes to the socio-material infrastructure underpinning news production can be identified and investigated in order to highlight how the intersecting of social media architectures and affordances are impacting GNA journalism practice. This approach facilitates analysis of how social media may be shaping GNA practices, norms, and values – and it enables interrogation of how the GNA culture of practice pushes back on the technology in a process of mutual shaping (Boczkowski 2004a, Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006).

This thesis thus asks: *What is the role of social media in news production in global news agencies and how are these technologies understood by newsworkers?* Considering trends across the news industry, it posits that the use of social media may be transforming GNA news production and culture. This broad research problem was broken down into three sub-questions:

1. What characterises social media practice in news production?
    1a. How do GNA newsworkers use and understand social media?
    1b. How do GNAs as organisations use social media?
2. How do GNAs shape newsworkers' use and understandings of social media?
3. What are the implications of GNA social media practice for GNA journalism?

The research aims to a) elucidate social media practice in news production at GNAs on an organisational and individual level, b) identify and explicate the framing of social media by GNAs, c) explore newsworkers' understandings and perceptions of social media, d) analyse the relationship between GNA professional culture of practice and newsworkers' use and perceptions of social media. It does this by achieving the following objectives:

- Scope the field of news agency studies and social media studies, presenting a critical analysis of pertinent work to-date and positioning this research study.
- Develop a theoretical framework for the analysis of social media in news production that accounts for technology and culture in journalism.

- Investigate organisational use of social media by conducting an analysis of GNA social network site activity on Twitter and Facebook.
- Interrogate how GNAs frame social media by conducting qualitative framing analysis on organisational social media guidelines.
- Explore, record and explain newsworkers' use of social media in the GNA news production process by observing and interviewing them.
- Analyse newsworkers' described interaction with social media, identifying systematic patterns of use (production practices and routines) and irregular use.
- Interrogate and explain newsworkers' understandings of social media and perceptions of their impact on working practices and content.
- Analyse the relationship between newsworkers' uses and understandings of social media, organisational framing of social media, and news production practice using the theoretical framework of cultures of practice for analysis.
- Discuss the implications of the findings for GNA journalism and its future directions.

In this way, the research explores the potentially contradictory cultural practices introduced by social media at GNAs and interrogates how these longstanding journalistic behemoths and their newsworkers are adopting and adapting to social media in an era of digital and networked journalism.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Why Study Social Media at GNAs?

2.1 Summary

This chapter argues that there is a gap in knowledge about the use of social media technologies at global news agencies (GNAs) and that this gap has left our understanding of contemporary news production in these uniquely important news organisations notably lacking. Social media and the non-conventional methods of organisation they support have caused disruption to journalism and posed particular challenges for GNAs. Investigation is needed into how these organisations and their newsworkers' are dealing with this change in order to understand evolving forms of practice and emerging cultures of news production. Through critical analysis of a selection of sociological studies of journalism, news agency research, and new media/social media studies, this literature review makes five key arguments: 1) that global news agencies are a crucial and under-researched site for study; 2) that technology is an overlooked area of research in news agency studies that plays an increasingly significant role in news production; 3) that social media are a pivotal technological development to have impacted on journalism practice and the GNA production process in recent years; 4) that it is imperative that the use of social media is researched empirically at an organisational level (across GNAs) and at individual level (amongst newsworkers) and finally; 5) that this empirical work should be used to advance theory in journalism studies and specifically in relation to GNAs.

2.2 Introduction: Journalism in a Digital and Networked Era

This research begins from a conviction shared by journalism and new media scholars alike that "in an era that is arguably defined by informational activities and networks of communication, the extent and the quality of communication systems - whether public or private - deserve high priority" (McQuail 2011: 18). Digitally-networked media and Internet technologies have profoundly altered the environment in which journalism is practiced and the work of journalists, presenting both opportunities and challenges for news producers (Deuze 2007, Gulyas 2013). The structural framework

within which journalism functioned during the 20th century has since the 1990s been subject to fundamental disruption from growing use of the Internet and digitally-networked technologies. Processes of digitisation and convergence (of media formats, industries, and genres) in online spaces have altered the journalism landscape (Bardoel and Deuze 2001). An important outcome of these changes has been a significant reduction of the barriers to publishing and the subsequent growth of mass self-communication (Castells 2009). This environment has enabled an explosion of news providers publishing online via websites, blogs and more recently social media sites. This new ecology of diverse information providers is built on networked forms of organisation and structures that have complicated the traditional top-down, 'one-to-many' mass media model of journalism and have disrupted established hierarchies of power and production. Associated processes of 'produsage' have ensued, whereby collaborative communities create shared content in a networked, participatory environment, breaking down boundaries between producers and consumers/users (Bruns 2008).

These developments are part of on-going, fast-paced diffusion of digitally networked and increasingly mobile computing which continues to impact on economic, social, political and cultural life. Since the 1990's, scholars have been highlighting the importance of digital networks to capitalist societies in concepts such as 'the information society' (Webster 1995), theories of 'the network society' (Castells 1996, Van Dijk 2006, Benkler 2006), 'network sociality' (Wittel 2001), 'networked individualism' (Wellman et al. 2003), 'network cultures' (Varnelis 2008), 'network publics' (Ito 2008, boyd 2010) and 'networked selves' (Papacharissi 2010). These works attempt to document and understand how networks have become fundamental to the complex structures of economic and social organisation, to cultural production and social and cultural interaction. In this vein, Journalism Studies has also recognised the salience of networks, and particularly those enabled by digitally-networked technology, to the study of news production. Scholars have discussed networked media (Boler 2008, Russell and Echchaibi 2009) and "networked news" (Beckett and Mansell 2008), investigated relationships between affective news and networked publics (Papacharissi 2012) and proposed a new model of "network/networked journalism" (Beckett 2010, Heinrich 2011) – a concept which has become increasingly established in scholarly and practitioner discourse.

This last concept is strongly related to processes of convergence that are contributing to the reconfiguration of relationships and boundaries, for instance between old and new media, between users and producers (Jenkins 2004, Bruns 2008), and

between "topdown and bottomup journalists" (Deuze, Bruns and Neuberger 2007). For Jeff Jarvis (by whom many consider the term to be coined[1]), networked journalism "takes into account the collaborative nature of journalism: professionals and amateurs working together to get the real story, linking to each other across brands and old boundaries to share facts, questions, answers, ideas, perspectives" (Jarvis 2006). Knight and Cook describe the emergence of a new media ecology that is "social and fluid, and trades on connections and collaborative relations" (2013) whilst Beckett argues that the established news media have been forced to seek value in networking due to the transformation from an "era of relatively scarce news information subject to limits of time and distance in its gathering and dissemination" to "an abundance of instantly accessible data and commentary that can be connected onwards almost infinitely" (2010: 1). Beckett highlights the increasingly important role of Web 2.0 technologies such as social networks in this environment, particularly in connecting professional journalists with content produced by the public and describes a form of Networked Journalism characterised by "a synthesis of traditional news journalism and the emerging forms of participatory media enabled by Web 2.0 technologies", which "changes the creation of news from being linear and top-down to a collaborative process" (2010: 1). Web 2.0 – a term for the vast socio-technical assemblage of technologies (devices, hardware, software, applications, techniques etc.,) and people that create networked social spaces and information flows on the Internet (O'Reilly 2005; 2006a; 2006b) – has enabled non-professionals to increasingly take part in the journalistic process, of "selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating and otherwise massaging information to become news" (Shoemaker, Vos and Reese 2009: 73).

In this context, social media have become a key space for the public to engage with journalism – consuming, producing, sharing and interpreting news as well as collaborating with news organisations due in part to their support of multi-layered one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many communication. However at the core of the network journalism sphere, traditional or 'legacy' news media continue to hold dominant positions and maintain a uniquely influential role in 'constructing reality' through their representations of the world in the news. Many have extended their reach by using emerging technologies to their advantage. These mainstream outlets "retain their role as gatekeepers of what is credible and worthwhile rather than merely available" (Singer

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[1] There were many disparate groups and individuals working on similar ideas around this time such as those that were part of the Networked Publics project from The University of Southern California's Annenberg Center for Communication. See http://networkedpublics.org/about.html

2005: 179). Amongst the leaders in international journalism, an elite group of three global news agencies have retained their long-established and unrivalled dominance in the provision and syndication of international news. In order to uphold their position in a fast-changing network journalism environment, they are however changing the way they work and the technologies they use (Boyd-Barrett 2010; Laville 2010).

The development of a network journalism ecology is strongly linked to recent changes in traditional news organisations' production processes, the business models underpinning journalism, and conceptions of the role journalists play in society (Knight and Cook 2013). News organisations around the globe are pursuing technological development alongside diverse forms of organisational and professional change (Pavlik 2013) in an attempt to remain financially viable and socially relevant. Modifying service for the digitally-networked era whilst simultaneously upholding traditional journalistic ethics and values has however caused friction. At the core of developments is the changing relationship between the news producer and consumer and the blurring of the boundary between professionals and non-professionals. As Lewis argues, this has opened a "central tension for the profession: how to reconcile the need for occupational control against growing opportunities for citizen participation" (Lewis 2010: x; see also 2012). At the heart of this tension is journalism's dynamic relationship with social media, which continues to grow and evolve.

Social media represent a key nexus between journalists, news organisations, and members of the audience and wider public (albeit the proportionately small section of the global public that subscribe to these services). In this way, social media can now be seen to hold a particularly interesting and increasingly significant role in emerging forms of news production. They are digital networks for real-time news (Hermida 2013), implicated in the gathering, production, distribution and consumption of news (Bruns and Highfield 2012; Hermida, Lewis and Zamith 2012; Newman 2011; Newman, Dutton, and Blank 2012). As social media have become an established part of the global news system, traditional news organisations' ad-hoc engagement with these technologies has been transformed into increasingly strategic, organised and systematic use (Wardle and Williams 2008). With this, interpretations of social media technologies - their uses, benefits, opportunities, constraints, risks, challenges etc., - are in the process of being negotiated and moving toward a state of relative stability. This is occurring simultaneously in various journalistic contexts and 'in practice', i.e. through use. These processes of negotiation and (re-)definition can be seen to be occurring at different levels (e.g. an individual level, group level, across the organisation and the profession, as well

as at a cultural and societal level), all of which are imbricated and simultaneously influencing each other. What is certain is that how social media are understood and used by key stakeholders in the journalism industry – such as global news agencies – has broad implications for the profession, for journalism's relationship with society and for the news content that the public receive, interpret, and act upon. Lewis argues that the ways in which the core tension between professional control and open participation is navigated "will affect the ultimate shape of the profession and its place in society" (Lewis 2010: x). The ways in which professional news producers use and understand social media represents a principal element of their approach to reconciling this tension. Therefore investigating GNAs' and newsworkers' social media practice and their interpretations of these technologies, as well as the practices social media support and the material they host, is vital to understanding the dynamic present and uncertain future of the profession. This research, spanning 2009-2015, thus covers a unique period of development of social media in GNA journalism, taking in initial adoption of these technologies through to their establishment as a pervasive presence in news production.

Amongst the myriad news organisations in the international news system, the global news agencies - namely Reuters, Associated Press and Agence France-Presse - hold a unique and particularly influential position: their public reach and the intra-industry influence of their content are unrivalled in the profession. These three news agencies engage vast global networks of newsworkers to produce a form of 'wholesale' journalism in large quantities, which is sold on to the wider news industry and is also now increasingly provided directly to the public (Greissner 2012). Together, these agencies construct a huge amount of the original, professional journalistic content about global affairs that circulates in the journalism ecology whilst also curating, syndicating, and packaging a massive amount of non-proprietary content. Their output in turn contributes extensively to the news available to the public from which they construct their image of global reality. Investigating the nature of news production at the GNAs is thus hugely important for understanding the nature of a large proportion of the original international news that circulates globally. Critical analysis of how global news agencies have dealt with technological change and innovation is therefore vital and forms the backbone of this thesis, achieved through analysis of their engagement with social media.

There have been numerous claims made about the impacts of social media technologies in news production, often based on limited empirical evidence or asserted without sufficient context or balance. These include optimistic assertions that they are democratising newsflow, undermining corporate agenda-setting and shifting the balance

in newsgathering between official or elite sources and non-elite sources, allowing voices from "the general public" to enter international newsflow in a way that was not previously possible (Broersma and Graham 2013). Similar claims were made before the rise of social media about blogs. For example, Bowman and Willis argued in 2003 that for the first time the hegemony of professional journalism as gatekeeper of the news is threatened by "not just new technology and competitors but, potentially, the audience it serves", which could become an active participant in news production as it was "armed with easy-to-use web publishing tools, always-on connections and increasingly powerful mobile devices" (2003: 7). Empirical research debunked and added nuance to these claims (Meraz 2009, Singer 2005). However industry insiders and news agency researchers are often as optimistic about the benefits, arguing for example that "they have greater opportunities in this new environment of the technical revolution" (Ramos 2014: 5).

There are equally as many pessimistic claims that social media use degrades the quality and reliability of news, that social media undermine journalism's role in breaking news and are destabilising its business models. Few of these claims are supported by rigorous empirical research and they often fall into a trend of technological determinism that assumes the inevitability of paths of technological development and their effects on society. As far as international news is concerned, GNAs are a particularly important industry sector to investigate regarding their relationship with social media. This is due to their place as leading generators of original news, as "wholesalers" at the top of the food chain, serving and drawing from the retail market, and their associated capacity as gatekeepers and agenda-setters. The extent and nature of their interaction with the public via social networks in part shapes their approaches to news production and in turn the product they sell. For instance, their treatment of (social media-sourced) user-generated content is influential in that their choice of whether to include it, when to include it, in what way, from which sources, with which caveats, and what context has a huge impact on what clients, and in turn audiences, receive in terms of representations of the world.

Important questions arise from these considerations that only empirical work can answer – how are global news agencies using social media and social media sourced user-generated content? What practices and routines have developed to deal with these technologies? How do newsworkers perceive social media and describe their role in news production? How has this shaped the socio-technical infrastructure that underpins the GNA production process and with what impact on professional culture? What implications might all this have for the nature of GNA journalism? These are the broad questions to which this thesis aims to respond.

2.3 GNAs: A Crucial Site for News Production Research

An area of journalism that has received surprisingly little academic attention despite its unrivalled importance in producing original news and its dominance in international news provision is that of the global news agencies. Also known as international news agencies or wire services, these news wholesalers supply the retail news industry as well as government, business and third sector organisations with original international news content in all media formats and in numerous languages. This industry sector is recognised by scholars as having important agenda setting and gatekeeping functions and influence on shaping international newsflow in the global news system (Boyd-Barrett 2010, Ito 2009, MacGregor 2013, Stevenson and Shaw 1984, Thussu 2000, Wu 2003) but has received relatively little investigation, and extremely little empirical research regarding its news production process. The GNA oligopoly sets the agenda for what international news is carried by other media by defining the choice of stories and amount of visuals available to them and as they now also bypass intermediaries online to distribute straight to the audience, they have become "more crucial" (Paterson 2007). With the exception of a few key studies (see in particular Paterson 2011a; 2007; 2006), there is a lengthy and notable gap in research of the practices and cultures within GNAs and the area remains under-theorised.

The body of news agency research that does exist has rarely investigated the importance of technology for news production practice, treating it as an ancillary issue, or addressing it only superficially. The wider journalism research agenda of the last twenty years reflects a turn towards taking technology seriously in news production studies and has steadily developed a corpus of work on the role of Internet-based and digitally-networked technologies in journalism, crossing disciplinary boundaries to aid conceptual and theoretical development. The few studies that have in recent years illuminated global news agency work imply that some of the changes happening in the wider industry may also be occurring at GNAs (MacGregor 2013; Paterson 2011b) but lack of empirical investigation into the specific contexts of GNA production, in particular with reference to the raft of new digitally-networked technologies that are increasingly important for production, has kept this area largely unexplored. GNAs are distinct from other media (see 2.3.3 to 2.3.4) and it should not be assumed that insights from other news organisations can be applied to this context. GNA research has rarely gathered empirical data on organisational or individual newsworkers' use of technology, nor has it attempted to analyse and theorise the role of new technologies in the production process. As Oliver

Boyd-Barrett points out, "Theorization about news agencies depends critically on the development of empirical information about these organizations… Because information has accumulated in incremental, piecemeal fashion, the pace of theorization has been slow" (Boyd-Barrett 2013: 339).

The following sections draw from existing research into the role of GNAs in the global journalism ecology to make the case for studying these uniquely influential news producers in the context of emerging forms of network journalism through empirical analysis of their practices and news production culture.

2.3.1 The 'Big Three'

There are widely considered to be three global news agencies, namely Reuters, The Associated Press (AP) and Agence France-Presse (AFP), which together form an elite industry sector with a unique and influential position in the global news ecology[2]. They have built their position and reputation over more than a century to become what leading news agency researcher Oliver Boyd-Barrett termed the 'Big Three' (1980).

A news agency is a journalistic organisation which supplies news (primarily) to retail news media, including print and digital news providers and television and radio broadcasters. Global/international, regional and national news agencies work with each other and in conjunction with other news organisations to form a complex and extensive multi-directional news exchange system, which trades in news and information through subscriptions and payments, circulating news from global to local and vice-versa (Boyd-Barrett 1980, Paterson 2011a). News agencies can be based on differing business models but are most often corporations or co-operatives. The News Agencies Council (NACO), an organisation grouping news agencies from around the world in a discussion forum, defines the term 'news agency' in its statutes as:

> … an organization that produces and distributes its own, original news, including a general news service, and has agreements with the media and other subscribers, and is relevant in its market. A news agency, which can

2 There is debate over which organisations qualify in this category – for example Reuters considers its primary competitors to be the Associated Press and Agence France-Presse but also the photo agency Getty Images, whilst it lists competitors for its "direct-to-consumer publishing business" to include WSJ.com, Bloomberg.com, Forbes.com, CNNMoney.com and FT.com.

have either a national or international focus, can include among its products contents from other news agencies, provided the relevant parties have an agreement to cover this use. (NACO n.d.)

Originally founded to supply the growing newspaper industry with news (texts), GNAs later expanded into the production of photographs, audio, film/video, and graphics, to feed each new media market as it developed alongside associated technological developments, often taking over specialist companies along the way and incorporating their expertise (Paterson 2011b). In this way, they have grown to dominate the provision of original international news across media platforms and markets, including for television, radio, newspapers, and now websites and other Internet fora, forming an unofficial oligopoly in international news provision. This makes them instrumental in setting the agenda in both the day-to-day and long-term consideration of what is 'newsworthy' in international affairs (Boyd-Barrett 1980). It makes them a central actor in framing coverage of international issues and events and in directing the flow of news globally. This has not gone unnoticed by scholars, politicians, policymakers and media workers who have voiced continual concern over the imbalances and inequalities in news flow, often placing news agencies at the centre of their complaints (Masmoudi 1979, Frau-Meigs et al. 2012, Allison 2013).

GNAs also serve non-media clients (such as governments, intelligence agencies, third sector organisations, businesses, individuals etc.) They have extensive reporting networks around the world, staffed by professional newsworkers working in various languages. They maintain a complicated network of relationships with other (international/regional/national/local/hyperlocal) news providers with which they trade and buy content to supplement their own. Traditionally not a lucrative form of business, many agencies rely to varying extents on either government support (e.g. AFP), being partly supported by a co-operative (AP) or larger organisation with profit-making divisions or on diversification into the sale of other more lucrative products to maintain market viability (e.g. Reuters). As such, in addition to supplying news, GNAs also offer myriad other services, including but not limited to financial services, telecommunications and technology services, and training and advice services.

The GNA news production processes are distinct from the rest of the news industry in which they operate and as such, it is inadvisable to assume they will be responding to new technology such as social media in the same way as other news organisations. Though insights from research across the industry can inform and guide

the study of GNAs and some common trends may be found, their particular context needs to be recognised as distinct and findings contextualised within it. In the pursuit of this end, a number of particularities can be drawn out from the literature. Each GNA maintains around 200 bureaus around the globe from small single-person operations to massive newsrooms, all with the core role of sending information (words and images) as quickly as possible (often seconds or minutes) to a central newsroom before building the story up. This processing and distribution point, usually a major city in the agency's home nation (i.e. London, New York, or Paris), may commission other coverage, take coverage requests from clients, and help monitor other media (Paterson 2011b). Paterson differentiates GNAs from most other media, explaining that the division of labour - organised broadly between intake and output - is crucial for their role as efficient information factories, marketing their "ability to bring in stories others cannot, and to "turn around" those stories quickly –even instantly– for use by the world's broadcasters" (2001a: 103). Constant communication between intake and output enables this speedy process of working to craft stories with basic and verifiable information, have them reviewed by an editor, and put out to clients. Editors often have to make big decisions on what to cover and how in a very short space of time – choices that will influence what becomes the global news most audiences will see.

The vast majority of news organisations around the world subscribe to GNAs for their coverage of international news - very few can claim to gather significant amounts of their own original international news and even those that do are likely to also subscribe to one or more of the GNAs as 'insurance'. This is because maintaining an international newsgathering staff is costly and is not considered to be financially viable by the vast majority of news organisations. In this way most are restricted by necessity to using content from one or more of the GNAs in order to cover international affairs - and even those with their own (often limited) foreign newsgathering staff will use agency material to cover stories they could not take care of themselves, as well as those parts of the world that are beyond their reach. There are of course a number of large news organisations that are also significantly committed to international journalism, which have a contingent of overseas reporters to cover the biggest international news stories - for example the New York Times and Wall Street Journal in America, and the Guardian in the UK. There are also those organisations that can be considered "rivals" in international news syndication, such as the BBC in the UK and CNN in America, and rivals in particular areas of service provision such as financial/business news such as Bloomberg and Dow Jones. As such, GNAs are one of many international news providers yet scholarship has shown that aside

from a few exceptions, the majority of news organisations are heavily reliant on them for original international news coverage. It has also shown that GNA news production

By providing vast amounts of international news whilst most news organisations cannot afford to maintain a contingent of foreign correspondents and by syndicating this coverage to a plethora of news and media outlets around the world, global audiences are regularly exposed to GNA news content (often without knowing it), making them very influential media players. Studies tracking the extent of dependence on GNAs at periods throughout the last 60 years have found consistent widespread reliance on them for international news (cf. Boyd-Barrett 1980: 15-16 for summary and Paterson 2006; 2011a for more recent examples), coupled with a reduction in the number of agencies (Weaver and Wilhoit 1981; 1983; Wu 2000; 2003). Many organisations even rely on just one agency for their entire input of international news. Moreover, as national agencies often act as an intermediary in the distribution of GNA services, passing on only a limited selection to their own subscribers, news organisations often receive a small, pre-selected digest of international news[3]. It has been argued that these dynamics of international news provision - relying so heavily on GNAs - has contributed to a homogenous international news environment characterised by a cycle of the same stories continually circulating from the same sources (Davies 2008).

This reliance on GNAs has increased as a result of the closure of major organisations' foreign operations due to financial difficulties over the last decade (Boyd-Barrett 2010, Constable 2007) as a result of: the instability of the news industry, characterised by failing business models and extensive restructuring (see for example Hamilton 2010, the POLIS-Oxfam report by Harding 2009, and Sambrook 2010); and lack of demand in a consumer-driven media market (Cottle 2009: 347-348). Several studies from various countries have reported increasing reliance on news agency copy in the news media (Lewis et al. 2008, Johnston and Forde 2009, Paterson 2006; 2007; Project for Excellence in Journalism 2003-2010), a trend which appears even more pronounced in online news (Paterson 2006; 2007). A study conducted in 2007, which examined patterns of information flow in online news media suggests that traditional network structures and hierarchies are being reproduced in online media (Himelboim, Chang and McCreery 2010, Wu 2007). Paterson's 2006 study, looking at the amount of measurable verbatim news agency coverage by a range of major online news services

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[3] As early as the 1950s the International Press Institute (IPI) demonstrated that almost three quarters of all foreign news in 105 US newspapers that were examined was supplied by the three major US news agencies: Associated Press (AP), United Press (UP), and International News Service (INS), only one of which (AP) still survives today (IPI 1953).

(CNN, BBC, ABC, Sky, The Guardian and others) found that it had increased substantially for each - from 68 per cent in 2001 to 85 per cent in 2006 on average. For Paterson, this has important implications for the diversity of international news content as the majority of what the public digests as news of international affairs comes from the same three organisations[4].

For many major traditional news outlets the needs of a twenty-four hour newsroom with a constantly updating website coupled with diminishing returns has led to strain on the budget and on staff. Reducing staff levels to recoup costs has meant even less original reporting. Very few organisations have ever been able to maintain a team of overseas staff to cover international events, mostly relying on GNAs to fill that gap, but crisis in the legacy news media industry means that even fewer seem to be doing so now. In television, foreign news teams have been reduced (Fleeson 2003), with organisations relying on their travelling reporters, 'parachute journalists' or freelancers to fill the gaps. It has been shown that cybermediaries (those who re-use agency content online such as news aggregators like Google) rely just as heavily on the agencies for international news content as traditional intermediaries due in part to the successful moves by the agencies to exploit opportunities to repurpose and tailor content that they already produce for new media markets (Paterson 2007; 2010, Watanabe 2013). As such, a vast amount of news of international affairs that circulates in the global news industry is produced the 'Big Three' and it is clear that they have had, and continue to have a defining role in the construction of durable conceptions of what constitutes international news.

The way this influence is exerted can be explained by looking at their role in three key areas: agenda-setting, gatekeeping and frame-building. GNAs can be seen to have a particularly influential intra-industry agenda-setting role concerning international news, which then translates into a broader agenda-setting influence as this content makes its way to the public via subscribing retail media and increasingly via the agencies' own proprietary web-based outputs. Although retail news organisations can report as they choose, what appears to be almost universal is "the selection of the same foci in international news reporting" and the similarity of this reporting to that of the GNAs (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1985: 53). They are important gatekeepers in the global news sphere, selectively choosing what to cover and how to cover it, as well as deciding what news to syndicate to their network of subscribers from other organisations (Lim

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[4] GNA copy is less pervasive in the East, especially where big regional agencies also operate, for example in China where Xinhua dominates or in Japan which has Kyodo, and where GNAs do not work in the native language.

2006). Early gatekeeping studies viewed 'gates' as "the codes by which people admitted or refused entry of certain information to a given system" (Zelizer 2004: 52), which when applied to journalism suggested that news selection operated on the basis of subjective choice (White 1950). Later studies however have come to reinterpret selection as a collective thought process, influenced by a complex variety of factors including 'standards' of professional journalism, such as objectivity, neutrality, and responsibility (Janowitz 1975). This strand of research foregrounded the way in which information selection was patterned and predictable and illuminated the constructed nature of news, highlighting "not only what was presumed "natural" about news but also what could be seen as "cultural"" (Zelizer 2004: 54). The choices GNA newsworkers make about coverage are in this way shaped by the culture of their organisations. The personal perceptions and attitudes of newsworkers intersect with professional practices and routines, cultural and ideological orientations of the organisation as well as the broader economic and political context including commercial policies, ownership patterns, relationship to advertisers and governments etc., to shape the news they produce (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). In this way, GNAs frame the news through the process of social construction in which newsworkers determine the structural qualities of content using words, images, phrases, narratives, presentation styles etc., which serve to present an interpretation of reality to an audience (Gitlin 1980). It is argued that through these frames, news producers (whether consciously or not) promote particular definitions, interpretations, evaluations, and recommendations of the topics they cover and therefore influence the public who consume the news and interpret it.

When looking at who and what is ascendant in shaping the agenda of GNAs and how that happens, we must consider the changing structure of news production operations. Social media are prominent amongst the new elements influencing operations and this thesis argues they therefore must be studied. For example, social media users can now use the sites to contribute, amongst other things, user-generated content to GNA coverage but no empirical work has yet been conducted to explore what this means for GNA journalism. Paterson argued that "discourse on international events of consequence within the global public sphere is substantially determined by *the production practices and institutional priorities* of two information services – Reuters and the Associated Press" (2006: 20 emphasis added). These are changing in connection with technological development and the growth of social media in a network journalism ecology - it is therefore vital that this research investigates how and with what consequences.

2.3.2 'Invisible Giants'

The working culture, routines, and practices of GNAs have been largely hidden from the public eye due to their function as business-to-business news wholesalers, operating 'behind the scenes'. This backstage role led ex-GNA journalist and researcher Nigel Baker to refer to them as 'Invisible Giants' (2004: 63-78). Instead, news agencies have been more commonly researched by political economists and those studying global newsflow, prompted by the UNESCO debates of the 1980s. Beginning in the mid-1970s, GNAs were put under the spotlight by international groups led by the non-aligned nations who were searching for remedies for the perceived shortcomings of international news flow to developing countries. Developing countries voiced concern that they are forced, due to their reliance on global news agencies (referred to then as the "Western" agencies), to see the world and themselves, through Western eyes (Boyd-Barrett 1981/2, Masmoudi 1979). They also criticised the type of coverage their countries received, citing stereotypical portrayals with a focus on negative, violent, and catastrophic events. Several studies have since supported their claims, including the MacBride Commission report *Many Voices One World,* launched by UNESCO and published in 1980. The report however rejected proposals to regulate the free flow of news and little has since changed concerning the established flow of mainstream international news. This research has regularly been action-driven with an explicit focus on communications policy and regulation. There was also a subsequent turn towards the study of national agencies (Boyd-Barrett 2001) whilst several studies have investigated macro elements such as market structure, ownership, globalisation and global influence (Bielsa 2008, Boyd-Barrett 2000, Esperidião 2011, Palmer 2008). News agencies' agenda-setting role has also attracted attention, for example from McManus, 1994; Manning, 2001; and Paterson, 2007.

Alongside this are numerous historical accounts of news agency growth and development. As a result, there is a sound body of research on the inception and development of these agencies throughout the last 150 years and on the changing landscape of international news in which they operate. Historical studies have favoured analysing their organisational and commercial history (Bartram 2003, Bielsa 2008, Boyd-Barrett 1980; Clare 1998, Fenby 1986; Friedland 1992; Ilan 2013, Mathien and Conso 1997, Palmer 1991; Read 1992) or been memoirs (Collins 1925, Jones 1951, Mooney and Simpson 2003), whilst others have prioritised content analysis (Arya 2011, Fahmy 2005, Giffard 1999, Horvit 2006). The GNA research agenda thus reflects a continuing concern

with their hegemony and has been dominated by political economy and political communications approaches to investigating their influential role in global news flow and historical analyses.

Though several important - largely sociological/anthropological - studies have more recently focused on GNA journalistic practice and culture (Boyer 2013; 2011, Ilan 2012, Palmer 2011, Paterson 2011a, Venter 2005) as well as style/composition of news (Lagneau 2002, Stenvall 2010), little attention has traditionally been paid to what actually goes on *inside* the agencies. This may be for several different reasons including the renowned difficulty of gaining access to the agencies, their staff, and newsrooms. News agency ethnographer Chris Paterson is a notable exception to this as he has maintained a lengthy relationship with the Associated Press and Reuters and has followed developments in their production routines over a period of approximately twenty years, producing much-needed and insightful work in the area (1994; 1997; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2011b). Paterson does not however consider Agence France-Presseto be a 'global' agency, considering it to be a competitor only in some spheres of service. Paterson, has argued that one reason for the dearth in research on how GNAs function internally is due to the failure of two research traditions to connect: the sociological tradition, notably led by ethnographic newsroom studies (Fishman 1980; Gans 1979; Tuchman 1978) and the aforementioned international communication tradition which focused on cultural imperialism theories. Both began in the 1970s but declined before extending sufficiently to the study of news agencies. With regard to recent trends in Journalism and Communication Studies, the author would add to this list of oversights, the tendency of ascendant research strands looking at technology and innovation – most prominently science and technology studies (STS) and Internet studies – to overlook news agencies as a defining site for investigation. This is despite indications that the agencies have expanded their remit to ensure not only presence but a continuation of their leading position into the emerging new media ecology. The limited research into this suggests that the growth of the Internet as an information and communication medium and the proliferation of mobile and digitally-networked technologies has allowed GNAs to provide elements of their news service directly to the public via websites and applications as well as news aggregators and portals (MacGregor 2013). This allows for new forms of interaction between GNAs, newsworkers, and the public but they are yet to be investigated.

What is notable in the preceding discussion is that GNAs make up a relatively hidden sector of the journalism ecology, which has for many years remained under the

radar of public scrutiny and been surprisingly low on the academic agenda. The following section discusses what is known about the GNA production process and professional culture and argues that much of this is outdated and does not adequately addressed technology - or more specifically social media - in GNA newswork in any depth.

2.3.3 Professional Culture, Organisation, and Practice

The principles that underpin the professional ideology of journalism in democratic, capitalist society also inform GNA journalism. McQuail refers to the professional ideology of journalism as containing "unwritten obligations" (2005: 162). Deuze sees this ideology encapsulated by five traits - public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics (2005: 458). However the role, remit and composition of GNAs make them distinct from other news organisations and have important implications for their production process, news services and role perception. Though no singular standard definition of journalism 'professionalism' exists that unites journalists, GNAs can be seen to share a distinct conceptualisation of professionalism. As a result, there are differences between the working practices, structures and routines in GNA news production and those of other, more commonly studied retail news organisations. Understanding the history of global news agencies is key to understanding how they function today as many founding principles and conventions shape the contemporary organisations. There is a rich body of literature on the historical development of the agencies (see for example Boyd-Barrett 1980, Palmer 1991, Putnis 2006, Read 1992, Storey 1951) from which several important points about the GNA culture of news production can be drawn.

The values of speed, objectivity, impartiality, neutrality, accuracy and reliability form the core of a professional ideology that shapes GNA professional practice. Importantly, speed "drives everything" and "observation of rival agencies (and major broadcasters like the BBC and CNN) is the key determinant of what is fast enough" (Paterson 2011b: 131). This value system reflects the conditions under which it was created and developed but it also served to shape those conditions and news production contexts as they evolved. In this way, professed values inform practice and conventions of practice inform values in an iterative cycle. For instance, the international news agencies were set up between 1835 and 1851 to exploit newly available telegraphic

communication infrastructures, which was at the time an expensive way to communicate and a sometimes unreliable medium. Therefore they kept words to a bare minimum of 'facts' to save money when sending copy and ordered information in an inverted pyramid style (in which the most important information is prioritised) to ensure the key elements reached the destination first. In this way, they valued speed and accuracy in their reporting. Their flagship product thus began as (and has continued to be) 'hard' or 'spot' news of (what they assess to be) the most important international stories of the day, delivered in the most concise and timely manner achievable. In large part this is a reflection of their clients' demands but it also a product of the sociotechnical contexts of production, including the affordances and constraints of the technologies they used. This dedication to hard news and commitment to speed is reflected in their company profiles, for example, the AP website's history section states: "Often called the "Marine Corps of journalism"—always first in and last out—AP reports history in urgent installments, always on deadline" (AP 2015). Over the years, as contexts of production have changed, GNAs have come to develop myriad other services aside from hard news - which are often more lucrative and serve to financially bolster the newsgathering operations - but they continue to refer to the same set of values. Since the 1990s, they have also made efforts to converge their separate and in many ways autonomously operating video, photo, audio and text news divisions leading to shared newsrooms, and to encourage multiskilling leading to the loss of some specialised roles such as video editor (Paterson 2011b). GNAs have through the 2000s had to respond to the rise of online news but because they have always been on a 24/7 schedule and have fed multiple outlets of different media types, the set-up this necessitated was easily adapted by GNAs. However their apparatus was not geared towards multimedia and combining these separate areas (Edmonds 2006) and the extent to which these convergence efforts have indicated a move toward multimedia needs further research.

A key characteristic that continues to be a defining factor of GNAs that separates them from other media is the distinct wholesale-retail business structure on which they are premised. This structure has several implications. Firstly, it has meant that they have had limited organisational interaction with the 'consumer' or 'end-audience'. Although they ultimately create news for a global public and therefore have many similar aspects in their news production process to other news organisations, the agencies have primarily geared their communication and product strategies towards their clients. Due to the agencies' desire to maintain a diversity of subscribing media clients, which can each have very different political views, the ideals of 'objectivity', 'neutrality' and 'impartiality' have

always been considered paramount to their style of news reporting (even before these values were quite so entrenched in Western journalism practice). Jonathan Fenby, an ex-Reuters assistant editor, in his book noted that the agencies had to be "…one thing to all people, operating within the status quo and avoiding involvement in the events they reported" (Fenby 1986: 23). Their efforts to "please all editors, everywhere" by working to appear objective and unbiased results in what Paterson describes as "a bland and homogeneous, but ideologically distinctive, view of the world" in which "stories challenging the ideological positions of dominant global political players (in agency eyes, the US and UK) receive little attention" (2007: 61). Management and news processing structures in television divisions have been described as designed to ensure commercial considerations prevail in journalistic decision making, where the main concerns were the preferences and cultural biases of the wealthiest clients (Paterson 2008). The wholesale business model has however protected them from the direct impact of declining revenue from advertisement sales that retail media has recently suffered, which though reducing clients' budgets has also increased their demand for content to fill the gaps the cuts have left, and bolstered business.

This conceptual commitment to a core set of common values forms the fundamental basis of how the agencies describe themselves and their role in society. The Reuters Trust principles which were created in 1941 to guide their work, state that "the integrity, independence and freedom from bias of Thomson Reuters shall at all times be fully preserved" and that "Thomson Reuters shall supply unbiased and reliable news services" (Reuters 2013). The Associated Press claims that: "For more than a century and a half, men and women of The Associated Press have had the privilege of bringing truth to the world" by ensuring that "news was reported quickly, accurately and honestly" and insisting on "the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior" in order to "report the news fairly and accurately, uninfluenced by any person or action" (AP 2015). Whilst AFP state that: "Truth, impartiality and plurality are Agence France-Presse's golden rules. These values guarantee rigorous, verified news, free from political or commercial influence" (Agence France-Presse 2013d). Despite the wide gamut of clients, the most financially lucrative deals are with the big players in the Western news media industry in the US and Europe whose demands and preferences have a considerable impact on news agency decision-making (Paterson 2011a).

These values of speed, objectivity, impartiality, neutrality, accuracy and reliability form the core of a professional ideology that shapes GNA professional practice but they are also the main principles at the heart of Western journalism more generally. They form

a conceptual framework of professional normative constructs built around the requirements of democracy, the system in which the founding countries of the Big Three functioned. What makes the news agency context distinct is the interpretation of these values by the GNA community of newsworkers and how they translate these ideals, norms and values into conventions, practices and routines. For example, the "central professional norm" of objectivity (Soloski 1989), which refers to the ability to judge fairly, without bias or external influence and convey this in news reporting, is appropriated differently by different news organisations. Schudson argues that "the belief in objectivity is a faith in 'facts,' a distrust in 'values,' and a commitment to their segregation" (1978: 6). Singer points out that it is not the absence of personal bias but is rather journalistic method - a fact-based process of newsgathering (2005: 177).

Though newspapers and broadcasters may outwardly convey a general political leaning (or even at times back political parties) whilst still professing to revere objectivity, neutrality and impartiality in reporting, this has not been the case with global news agencies. Traditionally their conventions of reporting deliberately left opinion to the client to assert and focused on the "'dry' language of facts" (Allan 2010: 38). Though features and comment pieces are now also common GNA products, these rationales continue to shape work practices. It can also be argued that political, cultural and social biases shape GNA news – and this point was at the heart of the previously mentioned NWICO debates – but in order to create a service that satisfies the fundamental needs of their diverse global client base, the agencies must ensure the appearance of objectivity and neutrality at all times so as not to offend or alienate current and potential clients (Paterson 2006). This is not to say that objectivity in its ideal state is ever achievable, but that this concept underpins the processes and practices of GNA news work and thus influences news production in a tangible way.

GNAs trade in professionally produced, vetted and verified information, relying heavily on a relationship of trust based on reputation. They have over many years built longstanding relationships with their clients based on their ability to produce reliable, high quality, timely, 'objective' and 'balanced' news content. Their legitimacy is derived from these relationships and client's trust in GNAs can be seen in how they treat agency material - it is uncommon for clients to double-check or question reports received from the agencies, which they expect to have followed rigorous procedures to ensure the reliability and objectivity of the content[5]. Often agency material is run without credit and

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[5] Although the BBC is an exception to this as it tries to corroborate even agency reports – see BBC 2013a, 2013b.

along with this practice goes an implicit trust and expectation that it will not contain content that will harm the reputation of the client organisation. In this way, the agencies rely heavily on brand recognition and respect to ensure continued subscriptions and revenue.

Domingo et al. (2008) describe news agencies in relation to their role in communication in complex (modern) societies by explaining their approach to the stages of news production, stating that they are characterised by: "Institutional access/observation (many to few); Rule based selection/filtering; Organisational processing and editing; institutionalised distribution to media (few to few)" (2008: 330). Paterson argues they "manufacture a bland and homogeneous, but still ideologically distinctive, view of the world" because of their conventions of production (2006: 6). The distinct organisation, structure, and culture of the agencies form the framework from which this constrained view of the world is constructed (Wallis and Baran 1990). The networks (of people/contacts) that the agencies have cultivated shape which voices are heard and which perspectives are portrayed in news coverage as they are a key organising structure behind the process of newsgathering. Agencies have been shown to rely on official sources and definitions of news - a practice common in 'hard news' production even as technologies enable broader connections (Livingston and Bennett 2003), and which serves to uphold the political and social status quo. In this way, the GNA network structure can be seen to form ideological parameters about what sources should be used, how they should be prioritised in coverage and how contact should be made with them. This can limit the scope of likely sources and perspectives. Much of their news is pre-planned and forward planning is a particularly vital part of newswork at GNAs because the diaries they create are relied on by other news organisations to choose and plan their own coverage (Paterson 2008).

Research has shown however that values and practices have evolved over time. For example the move from an initial preoccupation with the demands of 'home' nation client interests to a more global outlook (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 2001)[6] and from raw to packaged and broadcast-ready TV material and public relations work, which Hjarvard (1995) suggested was already blurring the line between the wholesale and retail level. Conceptions of the meaning of values and the purpose of practices also change along with

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[6] After World War II, Reuters advocated the adoption of a 'world outlook' (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 2001), which took the diversity of all potential markets into consideration and reduced its association with Britain. This was bolstered by later moves to diversify the demographic makeup of agency journalists to include more locally recruited staff (Boyd-Barrett 1980) and to decentralise control by making certain bureaus to direct distribution sites.

broader paradigm shifts in society and within the journalism community. GNAs are now located in an extremely complex global news ecology, populated by an immense number of other news providers, which often act simultaneously as partners and competitors. This number has expanded greatly alongside the growth of the Internet, which has reduced barriers to publishing and resulted in a widening of the boundaries of what can be considered news and journalism – linked to a huge growth in citizen news websites, news blogs, and social media sites. There are now 'social news agencies' such as Storyful and Demotix that source and syndicate newsworthy user-generated content as well as the vast and disparate networks of social media users who upload and share user-generated content independently. Despite the rapid change in this evolving 'network journalism' environment, there has been little interrogation of the associated changes in practice and culture at GNAs. The following sections look to address this shortcoming by highlighting important developments in the journalism sphere and in academic inquiry and identifying specific areas in need of further research.

2.3.4 Technology: The 'Black Box' of GNA Research

…AP delivered news by pigeon, pony express, railroad, steamship, telegraph and teletype in the early years. In 1935, AP began sending photographs by wire. A radio network was formed in 1973, and an international video division was added in 1994. In 2005, a digital database was created to hold all AP content, which has allowed the agency to deliver news instantly and in every format to the ever expanding online world. Today, AP news moves in digital bits that travel nearly as quickly as the news itself unfolds, to every platform available, from newspaper to tablets. (AP 2015)

It has been established that there is a lengthy and notable gap in up-to-date research of the practices and cultures within global news agencies and that the area remains under-theorised. There has been even less attention afforded to the role of technology in GNAs and this has recently prompted calls for research into how they have

responded to the challenge of the Internet (Boyd-Barrett 2001; 2010 see also Kulshmanov and Ishanova 2014). Historical studies have elucidated their successful track-record of capitalising on technological advances and being pioneers in the use of information and communication technologies to develop their news production capabilities, ensure financial viability, and maintain dominance in the field of international news production (Boyd-Barrett 1980; Paterson 2011a, Read 1992). In this way, GNAs played a key role in developing international journalism practice by exploiting and contributing to technological innovation to aid collection, storage, transfer and distribution of news in order to stay ahead in terms of speed, reach and accuracy. Their own history can be traced in close connection to technological developments, evident in their timely moves from the pigeon to telegraph, cable, satellite, and more recently the Internet and social media. This regard for technological innovation has been pivotal in GNAs' recent ability to adapt to the new media environment and makes them particularly relevant subjects of study in understanding technology in the contemporary global news ecology. Though macro-level studies have charted this history, everyday use of technology by newsworkers has been overlooked as have their understandings and perceptions of the technologies they use for news production. For example, in his seminal book *The International News Agencies*, Boyd-Barrett reserved a very small two-page section specifically for "technology" (1980: 52), which is perhaps emblematic of the marginalised role technology was attributed in the field at that time.

That said, certain elements of GNA news production can be elucidated and a number of trends have been identified over the period during which digital technologies have become ubiquitous. Importantly, GNAs have hesitantly implemented strategies for convergence, notably co-locating previously separated divisions in a shared newsroom to facilitate co-ordinated coverage - though multiskilling of journalists has been less favoured (Paterson 2011b). AP set up joint editorial meetings and created the role of "cross-format co-ordinator" to encourage "joined up" journalism (ibid: 135). They have updated their content management systems, for example media business analyst Rick Edmonds described in 2006 how AP were replacing the "fire hose" stream of content pumped out to clients with tagged content that they can retrieve on demand and suggested this enabled a shift of resources to specialist content production. He also pointed to a concerted move to increase video capability, mirrored in the other agencies. With the advent of digital file transfer protocol (FTP), which made it cheaper, easier and more reliable to send large files to the newsroom and evolution of computer capacity, including individual desktop terminals that enabled newsworkers to directly receive and send

compressed video files, the capacity for video grew and rolling news channels generated client demand for it (Paterson 2010). This increased the influence of television newsgathering on the text and picture operations, which would write from, or take frames from, incoming video when they had no cover themselves (Paterson 2011b) leading Baker to conclude video had overtaken the written word in its influence on international news coverage (2009). Baker asserts that live video coverage is now the norm for AP and Reuters and plays a key part in informing other areas of coverage (2009). It feeds not only rolling news channels but since the mid-2000s also online clients with coverage of organised conferences, speeches etc., scheduled or predicted events and rebroadcasted clients' coverage (Paterson 2010: 105-106). These insights provide useful context for understanding how the organisations work and how they have developed over time. They help situate this study in the GNA environment, providing a baseline from which to build comparisons with new and emerging practices.

As leaders in international news production, GNA practices can be seen as an indicator of potential approaches for other news agencies and new organisations in the digital and networked journalism environment (Boyd-Barrett 2010, Greissner 2012). Any discussion of contemporary journalistic practice demands consideration of the role of digital, networked and 'social' media technologies in the news production process. However little is known about this area of contemporary GNA news production processes or the impact of this new genre of technology. Moreover, news agency research and the disciplines of new media and technology research have an almost entirely separate history. Social media have become a central topic on both research agendas (Gillespie, Boczkowski, and Foot 2014), but the insights and theoretical constructs from new media studies are yet to be explored in the news agency context. In an overview of the literature on online journalism, Mitchelstein and Boczkowski argued that scholars rely "primarily on traditional conceptual lenses to make sense of emergent phenomena" (2009: 563). This has certainly been the case for news agency research and the recent growth of interdisciplinary work in journalism that takes studies in science, technology and computing into account (Hermida 2013) has yet to extend to the study of GNAs. Gillespie, Boczkowski, and Foot argue that "distinct intellectual trajectories originating from disparate fields have gathered around a common purpose: to understand media technologies as complex, sociomaterial phenomena (2014: 1). This research is guided by this common purpose and argues that using the theoretical vocabulary built from Science and Technology Studies (STS) can contribute to a rich and nuanced understanding of social media at GNAs (Hackett et al. 2008; see Chapter 3 for further discussion).

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GNA press releases, trade publications and the limited academic research that exists on social media use at GNAs suggest that direct-to-consumer publication through websites, mobile applications and social networks (Boyd-Barrett 2010, Bunz 2010a, Greissner 2012, Palmer and Nicey 2012, Ramos 2014) in direct competition with their news clients (Seward 2009a; 2009b) may be altering their business models. GNAs inhabit a unique place in the news industry network as a powerful node but one which is subject to the mutations of the connections on which it relies and from which it draws its fundamental purpose. They at the same time determine the availability of coverage of the world for much of the industry and are beholden to their clients' likes and demands (Paterson 2011a), which are changing in the digital, networked and 'social' era - and this context feeds into how GNAs are dealing with social media. GNAs may for example reify client perceptions of social media and the user generated content it supports. In line with industry trends, the agencies are also using social media to gather news and communicate with users (ibid, Högerl 2010, Ilan 2012)[7]. Details of how these changes are taking effect on the ground and consideration of what this may mean for the agencies and the content they sell on to the wider industry are however lacking. Discussion in this chapter of historical development at GNAs has illustrated how technological change has more often been evolutionary and layered than speculative accounts could have predicted and that context, be it historical, political, economic or social, is central to understanding and interpreting change.

Social media technologies are fundamentally different to those that have preceded them due to their digital and networked architectures. They have complicated the traditional top-down, 'one-to-many' mass media model and disrupted established hierarchies of power and production by enabling mass self-communication and blurring boundaries between professionals and non-professionals. Use of social media is complicating the way newsworkers conceptualise their own role and the role of their organisations. For instance it is problematising conceptions of the abstract but instrumental notions - such as objectivity and impartiality - that underpin journalists' work and ideas of professionalism. This thesis argues that it is crucial to our understanding of international news production that these changes are empirically

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[7] Ilan cites an article by Keinan in which he states that former CEO of Reuters, Tom Glocer "himself mentioned recently that citizen journalism is the next step for stringers, for "…sometimes the best news items come from them. When an Air France plane crashed we did not have any photographers at the spot, but we bought pictures from airplanes fans who happened to be there for €250 and those pictures made it to the front pages" (Keinan 2009, cited in Ilan 2012: 113).

researched at GNAs and that their impact is analysed. Moreover, it argues that the most compelling approach to do this is by exploring social media as socio-material artefacts, constructed through design and in use, in a process of mutual shaping.

2.4 Social Media and Journalism

Use of social media by the public and by newsworkers is having important consequences for the practice of journalism (Bruno 2011, Hermida 2013). Social media use is an unevenly dispersed but global phenomenon: in 2012, at least 52% of the population in Britain, 50% in Russia, 49% in Spain and the Czech Republic, 40% in Brazil and 31% in China used social network sites (SNSs) - only India (6%) and Pakistan (4%) were in single digits (Pew Research Center 2012: 1). In most countries, these numbers are growing and as of January 2014, 80% of online adults in the USA were using one or more SNSs (compared with 46% in 2010) - with a significant 71% on Facebook, 23% using Twitter (Duggan et al. 2015: 2). Defining social media is a difficult task and depending on the approach taken, they have been conceived of in varying ways from 'technologies', 'tools', 'applications', 'sites', to 'services', 'software', 'businesses' and more (see Appendix 1 for full discussion). They are described here as a collection of Internet-based digital communication technologies that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content, and share key characteristics regarding the way they enable users to interact, communicate, form/display social ties as well as store and transmit information (boyd and Ellison 2007, Jenkins 2006, Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). The functioning and viability of all social media is premised on their ability to afford digitally mediated social interaction and harness the UGC it creates. The ways in which these technologies structure interaction and communication, shapes the relationship between those who interact on and through them, introducing new dynamics (Jones 2013, Van Dijck 2013), which importantly for this research, shape news production and journalism.

Of the wide variety of social media that exist, Twitter and Facebook have the highest global subscription rates - Facebook had 901m active monthly users in April 2012 (Ebersman, 2012) and Twitter had 140m active users in March 2012 (Twitter.com). These two industry leaders are particularly influential in journalism (Papacharissi and Oliveira, 2012; Hermida, 2010a; 2010b; 2013) and have publicly displayed a growing company

interest in their role in journalism, hosting for example specialist information pages for journalists (Lavrusik 2011; Silverman, 2012, Twitter n.d.). This research defines Twitter and Facebook as social network sites (SNSs) – a sub-set of social media that share the following characteristics: 1) "have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-level data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site" (Ellison and boyd 2013: 158. See 3.9.1 for full discussion). On top of these shared foundations however, there are differences.

Set up in 2004, Facebook was originally built on location-based shared educational experience (drawing inspiration from the yearbook concept) but quickly evolved into a service connecting (what its design language terms) 'friends' - potentially any two users but more often users with shared experience and/or physical location. It allows users to create a profile and view other users' profiles (to varying degrees based on gradated friend/friend-of-friend/non-friend status) as well as message other users publicly and privately. It supports text (of varying length), hyperlinks, images and video. Users can post information on their own timeline (a part of their profile) or on other users' timelines, which through the service's algorithms generates user-specific news feeds about people's interactions and activities. Reciprocated relationships are highly prioritised on Facebook – originally they were obligatory but recently the company has devised ways to allow messaging and profile/activity viewing of users beyond the friend network. Twitter in contrast is commonly referred to as a 'micro-blogging' SNS. Launched in 2006, it enables short messages (tweets) and the public display of connection with other users. Tweets are capped at 140 characters, support still images and video (through the Vine application) and embedded hyperlinks, which are automatically shortened. Unlike many other SNSs (such as Facebook or MySpace), the following/follower relationship requires no reciprocation (see Appendix 1 for further definition and discussion). Twitter has been highlighted as the favoured SNS for journalists. It was described by NPR journalist Andy Carvin as "the newsroom where I spend my time" (quoted in Janssen, 2012), lauded by New York Times journalist David Carr for its "throbbing networked intelligence" (Carr 2010) and characterised as a "newswire", which functions like that of news agencies (Kwak et al. 2010, Petrović et al 2013).

Recognising the significance of social media, journalism research on the subject is growing. Studies suggest variety in how these technologies are viewed and employed

by newsworkers in different areas of the profession (Gulyas 2013, Newman 2009). Scholars have been charting their adoption in various news organisations, looking at their impact on the practices, perceptions, values and roles of journalists, interrogating newsworkers' understandings of them and analysing their impact on the profession. Recent studies have looked at journalists' use of social media globally (Cision 2013a, 2012a; 2009, Raymond and Lu 2011), nationally/regionally (Cision 2013b; 2012b; 2011a; 2011b, Kangliang 2011, Newman 2009, Paulussen, Heinonen, Domingo and Quandt 2007, Sasseen, Olmstead and Mitchell 2013), in particular organisations (Bruno 2011, Jordaan 2012, Levy 2010) including public service broadcasters (Hahn 2013, Wardle 2013) and for particular events (Burgess and Bruns 2012, Bruns 2012, Papacharissi and Oliveira 2012, Wardle 2012). Twitter's increasingly prominent role in reporting news events has been investigated through analysis of key examples over time, including the 2007 California wildfires (Glaser 2007, Sutton, Palen and Shklovski 2008), the 2008 US presidential elections, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the 2009 Iranian election protests (Lenhard and Fox 2009), and more recently the 2010 Haiti earthquake (Bruno 2011). Academics have also analysed companies' strategies for social media use in news work (Wardle 2013, Wardle and Williams 2008), individual journalists' practices (Hermida, Lewis and Zamith 2012) and the complex relationship between traditional news organisations and social media (Braun and Gillespie 2011, Murthy 2011). Situated within broader and more longstanding work on Web 2.0, Internet technologies, and digitally networked media, debates have emerged over the extent and nature of change in the industry related to these technologies (Deuze 2007). There remain however significant gaps in knowledge and overlooked approaches to studying this topic. In particular, their role in day-to-day news production is under-researched and interrogation of their role in news agencies is lacking empirical investigation. Analyses of organisational framing of social media and ways news organisations are shaping journalists' use of these technologies is scarce and theorisation of social media in journalism is growing but remains limited. The continued growth and documented social significance of social media as well as their increasingly important role in shaping emergent forms of journalism practice presents a strong justification for on-going research into their use in news production.

2.4.1 SNSs in News Production: Facebook and Twitter

The vast majority of traditional or 'legacy' news are now in some way actively using social media – and particularly the SNSs Facebook and Twitter - for parts of the news production process. News production research forms a central part of journalism studies and investigates the people, processes and contexts involved in news creation, interrogating the myriad factors that shape the news product, such as structures, institutions, organisations, practices, routines, cultures etc. For ease of analysis, Singer et al. (2011) break the news production process down into five stages:

1) *Access/observation - The initial information-gathering stage at which source material for a story is generated, such as eyewitness accounts and audio-visual contributions.*

2) *Selection/filtering - The "gatekeeping" stage when decisions are made about what should be reported or published.*

3) *Processing/editing - The stage at which a story is created, including the writing and editing of an item for publication.*

4) *Distribution - The stage at which a story is disseminated or made available for reading and, potentially, discussion.*

5) *Interpretation - The stage at which a story that has been produced and published is opened up to comment and discussion.*

Possibilities for participation of 'non-professionals' in the news production process have grown and diversified as the public assume certain communication functions and journalists seek to accommodate non-professional input within the spaces that media institutions once tightly controlled (Singer et al. 2011). Digitally-networked citizens can now be seen to be involved in the majority of these stages, participating in the "observation, selection, filtering, distribution and interpretation of events" (Hermida 2010a: 1). As a result of the increasing ubiquity of these technologies (acknowledging the huge differentiations in use between different groups and in different parts of the world), academics and journalists alike have become sensitised to the need to investigate how they are being used for news production in order to better understand their impact on journalism. The five news production stages are used below to organise discussion of key research into how social media are being used by newsworkers and news organisations.

Regarding *1) Access/observation*, social media – and in particular Twitter – have become spaces for news and information about newsworthy events to break. This has acted as an alert system for journalists, providing tip-offs about potential stories as well as often providing UGC and eyewitness accounts that can be incorporated into mainstream content (Bruno 2011, Gannam 2011, Newman 2011). Social media users can now be 'first responders' and act as stringers by providing immediate dissemination of non-official information about disasters and emergencies (Hermida 2010b: 1-2, see also Cooper 2011). Broersma and Graham (2012) conceptualise 'social media as beat', illustrating how journalists use Twitter to report political news by gathering information and politicians' own UGC (see also Armstrong and Gao). Reed found the majority of her sample of sports reporters (80.5 percent) had discovered breaking news and story ideas on social media (2013: 565) and used it more than Facebook for professional purposes. A number of notable instances of UGC being sourced through social media have become infamous, such as images of the Hudson River plane crash, information about the raid and death of Osama bin Laden (Newman 2011), the announcement of the British royal wedding and of Whitney Houston's death coming via Twitter and an unprecedentedly large amount of information and UGC coming from social media about the Arab uprisings (Cottle 2011, Farhi 2011, Hermida, Lewis and Zamith 2012). This trend had been growing before social media became popular (Sambrook 2005)[8] but social media have since made the capturing, uploading and distributing of UGC far easier and many journalists have now integrated these networks into their routines for monitoring, requesting and gathering UGC. Social media have also acted as a medium for synchronous and asynchronous communication, information solicitation, and a means of crowdsourcing (Ahmad 2010, Hermida, Lewis and Zamith 2012). Journalists are engaging in long-term processes of monitoring and tracking, as found by Jordaan (2012) in South Africa.

However, when it comes to stage *2) Selection/filtering*, there is little evidence of widespread use of social media in the decision-making process about what should be reported or published – this has remained predominantly within the remit of the organisation (Jordaan 2012). The same has been found for levels of participation offered by newspaper websites (Singer et al 2011). This pattern is the same for stage *3)*

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[8] For example, former Head of Global News for the BBC, Richard Sambrook, explained how during the 2005 London bombings the BBC rapidly received an abundance of UGC including more than 1,000 photographs, 20 pieces of amateur video, 4,000 text messages and 20,000 emails. He said: "people were participating in our coverage in a way we had never seen before. By the next day, our main evening TV newscast began with a package edited entirely from video sent in by viewers" (Sambrook 2005).

Processing/editing in news organisations, whereby the writing/creating and editing of a story is accomplished largely internally on organisational software, with little 'open' or collaborative activity on social media contributing to the process. Social media have certainly facilitated a concomitant sphere of citizen journalism where news that has not been selected or edited by professionals is produced and circulates but evidence of extensive collaboration by major news organisations with social media users in these particular processes is limited.

Regarding *4) Distribution*, research initially found organisations "shovelling" their news content onto Twitter, treating it largely as a new, free distribution channel (Hermida 2013, Blasingame 2011; García et al. 2011, Greer and Ferguson 2011, Jerónimo and Duarte 2010, Messner, Linke, and Eford 2012). Alejandro (2010) found that social media were mostly being used by the sample of international organisations for branding and making a presence in the social media sphere, followed by driving traffic to the company's news website and breaking news. Vis (2012) found Twitter to be used particularly as a reporting tool for breaking news. Holcomb, Gross, and Mitchell (2011) also found US news organisations largely distributing their own material. Meanwhile, Artwick (2013) found evidence of journalists engaging in both a 'journalism of service' (e.g. live tweeting news events and retweeting citizen voices) but also a more conventional 'journalism as product' (e.g. a significant number of reporters' linking to their own newsroom content). Phillips suggests an increasingly important value for news organisations is what she terms 'sociability' – "the means of getting others to disseminate information via social networks" (2012: 669). Finally, social media have become increasingly important for stage *5) Interpretation*, where news is discussed and commented upon (Subašić and Berendt 2011) and feedback is created and shared (Beckett 2008, Newman 2009). Beyond the production process, journalists are also using social media to promote themselves and their organisation's brand and similarly to the majority of social media users, for personal reasons such as connecting with friends and family (Raymond and Lu 2011) and communicating with other users.

This literature indicates extensive use of social media, which when viewed together may suggest potentially transformational implications for journalism. This has been heralded for its potential positive impacts by scholars who couch discussion in terms of democratisation and citizen empowerment (Shirky 2008)[9]. However a lack of empirical work across contexts has led to over-generalisations and a number of studies are now

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[9] In a trend that was set earlier by those looking at the impact of blogging and earlier forms of citizen journalism (Gillmor 2004).

counterbalancing these overly speculative and inherently positive accounts. Hedman and Djerf-Pierre (2013) concluded from their study of Swedish journalists that the image of the highly social media active journalist – "always online, constantly twittering and blogging" represents only a small fraction of newsworkers. Instead they found only some "enthusiastic activists" amongst "skeptical shunners" and "pragmatic conformists". Lariscy, Avery, Sweetser and Howes found business/financial journalists using social media very little for professional purposes with journalists "embracing the concept" more than they "enacted the practices" (2009: 316). An et al (2011) found that on Twitter, established media outlets retained the role of publishing news with little interaction with readers, while Singer et al. (2011) argued that journalists retained control over the core tasks of identifying, gathering, filtering, producing and distributing news and described major newspapers as generally averse to opening up significant stages of news production to the audience. The summary above shows a similar trend of continuing control exerted by professional journalists and their news organisations in the core areas of access/observation, selection/filtering and processing/editing. Hermida points out that research has tended to "focus on professionals who are using emerging technologies and who may be far from typical" (2013: 5) and this may be obscuring study of the rest of the cohort of newsworkers, including 'non-users'.

Findings of most research suggests that news organisations are embracing and developing some features for interactivity and participation in production but that these developments remain subject to traditional editorial logics and principles of organisation (Domingo, 2008; Domingo et al., 2008; Hermida and Thurman, 2008, Johnsson and Örnebring 2011). Social media users only influence certain stages of the news production process, and media organisations "are not willing (nor institutionally able) to release power over the production process to the user" (Johnsson and Örnebring 2011: 129). Domingo et al. concluded that: "In which part of the production process audiences can participate, and to what extent, is in fact a decision of institutional media" (2008: 332). These studies also show there are vastly varied approaches to technological change, each situated in an organisation's internal culture (Marjoribanks 2000a; 2000b) and that no single strategy is universally applicable. Surveying journalists in Finland, Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom about their use of social media and their views about these technologies, Gulyas (2013) found that patterns of uses and opinions varied between countries and the influence of professional variables (media sector, length of professional career and size of organisation) did not explain the overall patterns found. The study indicated that UK journalists were the most avid users of social media and those with the

most positive attitudes towards them and that while professional variables affect practices in some contexts, they do not provide an overall explanation of social media appropriation in professional practices. Gulyas argues that journalists are increasingly fragmented and their professional practices are influenced by myriad different variables. This suggests that it must not be assumed that studies of the use and perceptions of social media in one context can be generalised to the wider journalistic community as news organisations have embraced social media in very different ways as have their journalists.

The findings of two recent studies are particularly relevant for thinking about the 'Big Three' GNAs. Raluca Cozma and Kuan-Ju Chen found that foreign correspondents at major US networks and print outlets used Twitter mainly to discuss current events where they are stationed or elsewhere and to promote their news outlet, followed by using it to break news (Cozma and Chen 2013). They also found a very small amount of personal messaging and even less interactivity to ask for information from users. Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton (2012) found that journalists at elite media – i.e. prominent, prestigious outlets, adhered to existing norms and values far more than those from less elite organisations, thus maintaining their gatekeeping role and innovating less with collaborative functions of the medium. As agencies are elite, international news organisations with a high number of foreign correspondents, these two trends might suggest that they will tend not to maintain a high level of engagement and interaction with other social media users or to deviate from established norms and practices. It is important however to note that GNAs differ in many ways from other news organisations so it cannot be assumed that trends elsewhere will apply to this context. Furthermore, research to-date very rarely separates organisational approaches and uses of social media and individual newsworkers' approaches and uses of social media. These are closely linked and influence each other but should not be conflated, as an individual journalists' social media practice is not necessarily directly representative of their organisation's approach and vice-versa. Thus there may be rigid structures and routines shaping organisational use in contrast to more widely varied use amongst journalists. In this way, journalists may deviate from conventions and culturally accepted practice in some ways or may "normalise" their social media use to fit existing professional norms and practices (Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012) - or both. This research proposes to study the use of social media empirically at an organisational level (across GNAs) and at individual level (amongst newsworkers).

Scholars have also begun to tentatively theorise about the roles social media are playing in the evolving journalism ecology, positing emerging conceptual frameworks

such as ambient journalism (Hermida 2010a), affective news (Papacharissi and Oliveira 2012) and concepts like 'institutional adaptiveness' (Burns 2010), discussing boundaries of the profession (Lewis 2012) and changing roles for journalists such as 'gatewatching' (Stanoevska-Slabeva, Sacco and Giardina 2012). Hermida considers "real-time, networked digital technologies" (a category that is typified by social media technologies) as "awareness systems that offer diverse means to collect, communicate, share and display news and information in the periphery of a user's awareness," (2010a: 1). Hermida describes how these technologies facilitate the immediate dissemination of digital fragments of news and information. In this way, Hermida claims that social media technologies are creating "ambient journalism", with audiences contributing to the news process. Social media are playing a part in journalism via the individual contributions of their members and also through their combined collective output. It is this aggregated output of small pieces of content that Hermida considers as ambient journalism, with the system's (journalistic) value residing in "the combined effect of the communication." In this way, individuals are "performing some of the institutionalised functions of the professional journalist" (Hermida 2010a: 4).

Some of this theory-building makes reference to the notions of socio-technical architectures and affordances, which are concepts drawn from studies of technology (which had originally appropriated them from psychology – see Chapter 3 for more detail). Hermida states that Twitter extends the affordances - or 'possibilities for action' - of previous modes of communication by combining their features (such as the real-time exchange of information associated with the telephone and short bursts of information associated with instant messaging) in a "one-to-many and many-to-many framework that is public, archived, and searchable" (2010a). Based on a study of news storytelling on Twitter in 2011 in Egypt, Papacharissi and Oliveira (2012) offer a theory of affective news to explain the content produced and shared by networked publics in times of political crisis, which they found blended opinion, fact and emotion. As news organisations have been forced to close foreign bureaus due to financial constraints, the journalism industry is increasingly reliant on GNAs for their international news. Papacharissi and Oliveira argue that for the same reasons, "news feeds produced by citizens committing acts of journalism complement or substitute mainstream media reporting... these news feeds become of central importance to both producers and consumers of news, especially when other channels of information are restricted or controlled" (2012: 266 & 267). This points to the importance of researching the nexus of

social media and professional news production in an empirical manner but with the aim of also building relevant theory.

2.4.2 Plugging the Gaps: Social Media Practice in Context

Although accounts of 'social journalism' and 'social newsgathering' are on the rise (Domingo et al. 2008; Hermida and Thurman 2008; Jonnson and Örnebring 2011; Paulussen and Ugille 2008; Reich 2008; Wardle 2012; Wardle and Williams 2008; 2010, Williams, Wardle and Wahl-Jorgenson 2011, Williams, Wahl-Jorgensen, and Wardle 2011), the body of research remains limited in several important ways. Firstly it contains a limited selection of empirical studies into how exactly journalists are using and interacting with social media on a day-to-day basis in the context of their work environment, which is necessary to counter speculative and unsubstantiated claims about social media practice. Secondly it does not yet cover the myriad news production contexts that exist, focusing heavily on a small number of high-profile, largely US and European, retail news organisations, which serves to obscure whole sectors of the news industry and in doing so hinders the construction of a comprehensive picture of varied practices. Thirdly, there is a lack of theoretical development, which is to the detriment of a deeper understanding of contemporary journalism.

This research represents an attempt to contribute to addressing these gaps in the literature by conducting multi-faceted, qualitative, and empirical data collection in the overlooked news production context of global news agencies. It does this by engaging with fruitful emergent theoretical constructs from Science and Technology Studies, Cultural Studies, Education Studies and Journalism Studies to develop a unique theoretical framework for analysis (see Chapter 3).

This thesis is centred on the use of the two leading SNSs - Twitter and Facebook - as a result of reflecting the practices of GNA newsworkers and the popularity and dominance of the sites more generally. Existing literature is focused disproportionately on Twitter and Facebook, which is certainly to the detriment of our understanding of the myriad other social media services that are becoming mainstream in newsrooms (such as Reddit, Tumblr, Instagram, and Flickr etc.) In addition to their dominant positions in global use, Facebook and Twitter have also recently instituted a number of developments that suggest they are increasingly recognising their role in journalism and working

towards building this relationship. For example, since 2011 Facebook has maintained a page hosted by employees and 'journalist program manager' Vadim Lavrusik dedicated to providing information and resources for journalists using the site as work tool[10]. Facebook also launched the 'Subscribe' function in 2011 which allows journalists to extend the reach of their public posts by enabling their 'user audience' to get updates in their News Feeds without having to add that journalist as a friend. The company has since rolled out a redesigned News Feed that enables users to track dedicated feeds made up of specific types of content (such as news), which it claims makes following news organisations and journalists easier and makes news content added by journalists more 'visual' and 'engaging' (Lavrusik 2013). Following this, Graph Search - an expanded search function based on natural language processing rather than just keywords - was also introduced in January 2013. It was marketed by the journalist programme manager for Facebook as a tool to help reporters find sources, whereby journalists can search public material on the SNS (posts, images, personal identifiers etc.) and drill down to specifics, thus greatly improving the ease of conducting research on the site. Facebook also integrated Interest Lists which allow users to create a custom feed of postings by people around specific topics (Facebook 2014). Meanwhile, Twitter has launched the Vine application – a tool for capturing and posting six-second video content - which has potential to impact on journalism by enabling citizens and news organisations to share eyewitness video in real-time (Sonderman 2013). Twitter also maintains pages offering guidance and information for journalists[11].

These developments build on what can be seen to be an already robust and often fruitful relationship between journalists and social media and serve to facilitate the use of SNSs as a technological aid to newsgathering, distribution and engagement. However, the positive discourses expounded by SNS corporate communications and industry publications do not fully account for the use of SNSs in journalistic practice and serve to obscure myriad practical, professional and ethical challenges. Social media have created an environment that generates disruption to existing forms of organisation in traditional news organisations and the journalism ecology at large. But as Hemmingway points out, "(I)n place of grandiose, global and often hopelessly all-encompassing theories of news production, it is the internal routines, self-reflexive practices, technological arrangements and the unstable, constantly changing practical constraints that actually govern news

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[10] https://www.facebook.com/journalists/info
[11] https://media.twitter.com/best-practice/for-newsrooms-and-journalists;
https://blog.twitter.com/media; https://twitter.com/twitterfornews

production" (2008: 9). Empirical investigation is needed into social media practices as they are performed not only in the traditional news production locale of the newsroom but in the digitally-networked spaces that have become central to production routines. This can shed light on the complex interactions that characterise contemporary news work and go beyond asking questions about the "best" ways journalists can use these technologies into exploring the relationship between new media technology, journalistic practice, and culture.

2.4.3 Social Media: Challenges for GNAs

Social media pose a number of challenges for news organisations and have been disruptive technologies in journalism. Traditional organisations have found that incorporating these technologies creates a tension between the existing hierarchical organisational structure and decentralised media processes (Hermida and Thurman 2008, Lewis 2010, O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008, Singer 2010). Lewis (2012) argues that the culture of open participation associated with digitally-networked technologies such as social media has been particularly unsettling for journalism's professional paradigm, which is characterised by a logic of control over content. This tension between professional control and open participation is perhaps nowhere more evident than within intra-industry news providers such as GNAs, the business model of which relies on the industry's recognition of the value of their professional conduct and reputation. Opening up the production process to non-professional input and using unfamiliar technologies can be seen as a risk to this hard-fought reputation. As already discussed, social media enable any user to break news, for example by posting eyewitness images or immediate accounts of events. They also facilitate the curation and editing (communally) of news outside of professional parameters as well as the distribution of content. Thus at all stages they challenge journalism's jurisdictional claim to the news, based previously on a relatively closed professional culture which derived its authority from vetted processes and procedures as well as training and socialisation of newsworkers. The nature, scope and scale of participation they enable have forced news organisations to reassess their established boundaries (Lewis 2010: 51) thus questioning established notions of professionalism. Use of social media may then be prompting renegotiation of conventional and established practice in news work and this is particularly relevant in

GNAs, which have a tendency for conservatism in journalistic approach shaped by rigidity in the (formal and tacit) rules governing practice and reliance on official sources.

Hermida concludes that research into journalistic practices on Twitter suggests "norms of objectivity, accountability and gatekeeping are being subverted and reconfigured" (2013: 7). He argues that these unstructured, open spaces facilitate "the public expression of personal commentary", which challenges traditional conceptions of objectivity for journalists. Research into social media interface design explicates how social media is encoded to deliberately encourage forms of sharing (of opinion, content, personal information etc.) through design languages and functionality (Jones 2013, van Dijck 2013). This can be at odds with the conventions of factual, balanced information required in newswork. Social media collapse contexts (boyd 2010) due to their lack of spatial, social, and temporal boundaries and this can complicate newswork, which often relies on gauging and interpreting situations and relationships. One impact of this is the blurring of public and private and the difficulty newsworkers face in keeping the personal and professional spheres separate in order to adhere to journalistic values of impartiality, while attempting to reap the benefits of social media (in news work and in their personal lives).

The gatekeeping role of professional journalists relies on the public's conception of them as legitimate news providers who have the skills and training to decide what is newsworthy or credible. Social media and Web 2.0 technologies question this legitimacy as they allow for the co-existence of an alternative news agenda collaboratively created and curated by the "active audience" who become instrumental in the "selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating and otherwise massaging information to become news" – the process which Shoemaker et al. define as gatekeeping (2001: 73). They also enable public questioning, criticism and correction of news organisations' methods and content which can destabilise their assumed authority. However there is an ongoing relationship of mutual influence in this process of change by which technologies are shaping journalism whilst journalism is shaping them. Hermida suggests this when he explains that: "just as journalists are shaping the application of Twitter, so is Twitter shaping the nature of journalism. Journalists seek to shape a new communicative space to fit within prescribed conventions while they are, themselves, shaped by its sociotechnical traits" (2013: 7). It is the case-specific investigation of these shaping processes that can illuminate both changes in the practice and cultural forms of GNA journalism and identify significant points of consensus and contention.

2.5 Conclusion: Taking Social Media Seriously in GNA News Production

This literature review has identified use of social media at global news agencies as a crucial area for study that has yet to be investigated. It highlighted the intersection between newsworkers' practices and values and social media's architectures and affordances as a potentially fruitful yet previously undeveloped focus for research. By explaining how news production at GNAs has come to be an under-studied and under-theorised field and through discussion of previous scholarship in news agency research, the review foregrounded the role of technology as a particularly important subject missing from the existing body of work. Scoping the burgeoning field of the study of new media and technology in journalism research, the review concluded that social media are increasingly important in news production and are playing a significant role in re-shaping the journalism ecology towards a 'network journalism' but that the importance of contexts and cultures of production has not been given due attention. It highlighted that the period of time this research covers is a crucial interval in the development of social media in journalism and particularly at GNAs. Approaches to studying technology in journalism practice have also rarely taken full advantage of theoretical and conceptual development in the fields of New Media Studies and Science and Technology Studies (discussed further in Chapter 3). This review illustrates that a growing multidisciplinary focus on the networked nature of social relationships, interactions, and social spaces, is informing approaches to understanding digitally-networked technologies in journalism. It concludes that there is a need for news production studies to 'take social media seriously' by analysing their architectures and affordances in relation to production practices and cultures and proposes to contribute to responding to this need with this thesis. This approach recognises that contemporary news work is commonly digitally remediated and reflexively constituted through socio-technical networked spaces and that more critical attention is needed to advance understanding of social media practice and news production cultures. It suggests that theoretical developments from these fields can bring insights to journalism studies and alongside empirical research of new media technologies in journalistic contexts can help strengthen contemporary journalism theory.

Chapter 3 explicates the unique analytical framework of cultures of practice that has been developed to analyse social media at GNAs, drawing from the insights outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Background

Theorising Social Media @ GNAs: Cultures of Practice

3.1 Summary

This chapter outlines the novel theoretical framework that has been created specifically for application in the data analysis chapters of this thesis. As argued in Chapter 2, the approaches previously used in news agency studies and studies of social media are inadequate for responding to the research questions this thesis proposes and cannot effectively address the complex relationships between newsworkers, culture, and technology in news production. In response, this chapter constructs a theoretical framework that will aid analysis of social media at global news agencies by operationalising the concepts of a) cultures of practice, b) infrastructure and c) architectures and affordances, from a mutual shaping perspective. In order to account for technology in news production, the framework is interdisciplinary: it applies insights and concepts from sociology of news research, education research, cultural studies, new/social media studies, and science and technology studies to the study of global news agencies. The framework provides an interdisciplinary lens through which to view the practices and culture that have developed around social media within GNAs and will be used to analyse the emerging social, cultural, and technological context for social media in GNA newswork.

3.2 Introduction: A Novel Framework for News Production Analysis

Journalism is changing and the established language, paradigms and theories used by journalists and academics to understand it are increasingly ill-suited to the task. Lievrouw and Livingstone explain that "Mass production, distribution and economies of scale now contend with network externalities, cumulative advantage processes and power laws. Research that formerly examined audiences, reception and effects must now account for users and uses, interactivity, reconfiguration and reciprocity," (2006: 3). Research that examines media production must also account for these changes but as Chapter 2 explained, most journalism studies that deal with technology have had a

tendency toward technological determinism. Moreover, technology has been notably absent from global news agency research and the role of social media has not yet been adequately explored in its relationship to news production and professional practice. In response to these shortcomings, journalism scholars are crossing disciplinary boundaries in innovative ways in order to account for the role of technologies and new forms of mediation in the production process. This has most notably brought the combining of Journalism Studies with emerging Internet and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) research, as well as critical Media, Communication and Cultural Studies (see for example Boczkowski 2004a; 2004b, Deuze 2006; Paterson and Domingo 2008, Plesner 2009, Turner 2005). Drawing inspiration from these successful interdisciplinary ventures, this research constructs a theoretical framework with which to effectively analyse the integration and use of social media at global news agencies by combining a pertinent selection of concepts from several disciplines.

The body of research into the use of social media in journalism practice is generally split between empirical and theoretical (or conjectural) studies. The empirical studies describe and analyse social media practice in context, contributing important accounts and examples of the use of these technologies in particular countries (Gulyas 2013) and organisations (Wardle and Williams 2008) and of their impact on content (Hermida and Thurman 2008, Singer 2009). Meanwhile, theoretical approaches conceptualise the influence or impact of social media on journalism as process, product and profession (Hermida 2010a; 2010b; 2013, Papacharissi and Oliveira, Meraz & Papacharissi 2013), often in reference to the aforementioned empirical accounts. However there is a growing body of conceptual and theoretical development about social media that has yet to be integrated into journalism research (boyd 2010, boyd and Ellison 2007, Jones 2013, Papacharissi 2009; 2012, Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield, and Vitak 2011, Van Dijck 2013). The 'cultures of practice' framework developed here serves as a tool to link the empirical and contextual with the abstract and theoretical in order to meaningfully explicate social media practice in relation to the various factors that shape it both locally and universally, materially and conceptually.

The framework specifically allows for the articulation of the relationship between technology and culture in news production, highlighting the negotiation between determination and contingency: how social media technologies as part of infrastructures serve to shape newsworkers' actions, with technology 'pushing back' on actors and through materiality and cultures of practice, but also how with these relational contexts, human agency manifests and changes. It examines the intersection of the architectures

and affordances of social media with the infrastructure of GNA news production (of which they are now a part), interrogating how these technologies shape global news agency practices and culture and vice-versa, in a process of mutual shaping. Crucially, it offers a vocabulary and analytical approach which can begin to interrogate innovation and change in news production contexts.

3.3 Professional Ideology and the Social Construction of News

Sociological explanations of news production assert that news is not discovered, it is constructed. A central theme in journalism studies has thus been to identify factors that influence what becomes news, which involves balancing assessments of newsworkers' agency against the constraining and enabling factors of their environment. Looking at journalism as a phenomenon, researchers have identified the 'finite and identifiable practices' involved in news production and have come to share the belief that news producers play an important part of the social construction of our 'shared reality' (Berger and Luckman 1966, Tuchman 1978) through the manufacture of news. The sociology of journalism (or sociology of news) placed an emphasis on people, generating insights into "the patterns by which they grouped themselves into organizational and institutional settings and to the surrounding structures, functions, and effects through which they worked" (Zelizer 2004: 47). These studies analyse news as a social activity conducted by newsworkers and organisations (Schudson 1978; 2001; 2003, Tuchman 1978) and stress the view of journalism as a systematic activity. Zelizer argues that sociology has offered "a valuable way of tracking journalists' simultaneous existence in occupations, organizations, professional communities, and institutional settings" (2004: 51). A central issue for much sociological research has been the structure-agency debate with scholars highlighting the structural and organisational factors that shape the news whilst also pointing to the inherently subjective nature of news making, thus emphasising that the journalistic process is filled with choice, agency and contingency on the one hand and structural forces and constraints on the other. Jeremy Tunstall's seminal book 'Journalists at work' (1971) outlined the extent to which news was not unpredictable, spontaneous and chaotic - as it had often been portrayed. Instead he found the reliable

prediction, preparation and routine management of "institutionalised" news (Tunstall 1971)[12].

Several foundational concepts emerged out of the progressive waves of studying journalists as sociological beings: they have underpinned news production inquiry beyond disciplinary boundaries, including the proposition that despite the myriad differences in the diverse contexts of news production around the world, there are shared foundational concepts and practices associated with journalism (particularly within the Western world). Sociologists developed the pivotal concepts of professional and occupational ideology, and discussed identity and community as ways to interrogate and describe the shared ideals, values, norms, routines and practices within journalism. Though imbued with myriad meanings, the term 'ideology' in journalism studies can be seen as a "general process for producing meanings and ideas" (Williams 1983 as cited in Zelizer 2004: 72). Journalism's ideology is considered to be socially constructed and dynamic rather than static, although many core elements are longstanding and resistant to change. Recognising the many differences between the contexts in which it is practiced, journalism can be seen to have developed a common professional ideology over time through a continual process of assertion and redefinition of professional values, ethics, principles, norms and practices (Kovach and Rosentiel 2007, Zelizer 2004). In the Western model of journalistic professionalism, values such as objectivity, impartiality, accuracy, truthfulness, speed, balance and responsibility are recognised by practitioners as central to how they view and conduct their work and have been identified by scholars as the basis for many of the standards and procedures in news production. Through analysis of professional ideology and practice, scholars have emphasised the extent to which journalism reflects the practices and positions of key stakeholders in the news production process as much as the world it purports to report (Cohen and Young 1973, Curran and Gurevitch 1991, Tuchman 1972, Molotch and Lester 1974). For the Glasgow University Media Group, news could be better understood not as a reflection of "the events in the world 'out there,' but as the manifestation of the collective cultural codes of those employed to do this selective and judgmental work for society" (1976: 14). Gans found that the values and practices of journalism contribute to "paraideology" (1979) or a worldview. Through what Deuze (2008) refers to as a process of refinement and reproduction of consensus about what counts as a 'real journalist', this consensual ideology maintains the dominant sense of what journalism is and should be. The

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[12] For a full discussion of the importance of this work see Tumber (2006).

knowledge, values, routines, practices, and other elements associated with this ideology are played out in everyday activities, thus reifying the concepts and serving to socialise newcomers.

The notion that a common set of fundamental values and shared practices underpins the profession draws attention to how journalists and their organisations share certain cultural orientations and experiences (Wahl-Jorgensen 2009) and can be very useful. However it obscures the considerable diversity in journalism - not all journalists and journalistic organisations hold exactly the same values, prioritisation of those values, or even interpretations of those values. Different combinations of environmental factors influence the context in which journalism is practiced and it is argued here - and by many cultural studies scholars - that the complex relationships between economic, political, and socio-technical infrastructures give rise to varied cultures within (and at the boundaries of) journalism. Organisational sociologists suggest that all organisations have distinct cultures shaped by their values, goals, practices and production processes, and by the expectations and requirements of members (Hofstede et al., 1990). Established members socialise newcomers to understand and "accept" the organisation's values and function within the culture, whilst also contributing to it. This concept has also been operationalised in management studies, where organisational culture "refers to the pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organization's history, and which tend to be manifested in its material arrangements and in the behaviours of its members" (Brown 1998).

Cultures can be analysed at different levels. Journalistic cultures are always embedded in wider cultures (e.g. national, societal etc.) and incorporate subcultures (e.g. occupational, technical etc.). Journalism's professional and organisational cultures have been viewed as different but interrelated. Management and organisational studies scholars have suggested that the differences between these coexisting organisational and professional cultures can cause internal tensions about priorities. For example, they highlight professional standards and practices coming up against commercial and organisational imperatives. Hollifield, Kosicki and Becker (2001) test the common media critic's argument that corporate values have come to dominate newsroom decisions (see for example Bagdikian 1992, Underwood 2001). They investigate the degree to which organisational values (which they view to be based on commerce) dominate over professional values in employee hiring, arguing that this represents the degree to which one type of culture is dominating the other within that organisation or industry sector

(2001: 158). This approach suggests that cultures can be seen to co-exist and compete for position, with the balance between them changing over time.

The variety of contexts of news production and differences between them have been usefully elucidated through empirical investigations led by successive waves of ethnographies (and ethnographically-informed approaches based on interview and observation). These are among the most influential approaches for the study of news production, providing rich description of settings, practices, routines, norms and values. The classic 'newsroom ethnographies' took precedence in the 1970s and 1980s (Tunstall 1971; Tuchman 1972, 1978; Gans 1979; Golding and Elliot 1979; Fishman 1980; Ericson, Baranek and Chan 1987; Schlesinger 1987[13]), focusing attention on US and UK newsrooms and the structural and institutional forces at play within them. Herbert Gans (1979) found that when making the news, journalists operate within tight ideological and structural constraints, locating the construction of news "not in the journalist, the publisher, or in the gatekeeping editor, but in the process by which all parts, routines and arrangements of the organization are engaged for the creation of news." (Reese 2009: 280). The 'house style' of news content was shown to be set within organisations, using mechanisms which enable the synchronisation of news reports to conform to editorial policy (Schoenbach 2008). Considering the ways in which news is shaped as an organisational product focuses attention on the organisational and bureaucratic strategies, structures, and routines and can yield important insights into journalistic cultures and products (Epstein 1974, Roshko 1975, Altheide 1976, Tuchman 1978 Gans 1979, Fishman 1980).

The move to online news production has recently generated a new wave of ethnographic (Boczkowski 2004b; Cottle 2009, Paterson and Domingo 2008; Singer 2006) and case study (Cottle and Ashton 1999) research of journalistic organisations and news institutions and scholars have encouraged a return to this genre of research to explore the rapidly evolving news ecology (Klinenberg 2005). These approaches speak to the need for in-depth analysis of specific cases and to explore insights that may be generalised to journalism more broadly. However sociological research has also often overgeneralised models of journalism beyond their contextual applicability. The cultural analysis of journalism has a lot to add in this regard, crossing as it does disciplinary

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[13] See also Sigelman 1973; Murphy 1976; Burns 1977; Tracey 1977; Schlesinger 1978; Tuchman 1978; Bantz et al. 1980; Gitlin 1980; Hetherington 1984; Silverstone 1985; Hallin 1986; Soloski 1989.

boundaries and taking into consideration journalism in all its guises - from the conventional to the novel and unusual.

Thinking about journalism as culture works with and challenges conventional understandings of journalism - it sees journalism both "through journalists' own eyes, tracking how being part of the community comes to have meaning for them, and queries the self-presentations that journalists provide" (Zelizer 2004: 176). Cultural inquiry analyses rituals, meanings, symbols and symbolic systems, bringing to the fore their constructed nature, as grounded in practice (Hall 1980, Cohen and Young 1973, Cottle 2000; 2003). As Zelizer explains, this:

> forces an examination of the tension between how journalism likes to see
> itself and how it looks in the eyes of others, while adopting a view of
> journalistic conventions, routines, and practices as dynamic and contingent
> on situational and historical circumstance (Zelizer 2004: 178).

For journalism studies, this has meant a broadening of foci of inquiry to include those elements and forms of journalism previously regarded as less legitimate or unworthy of research. This extends to examining the new and more experimental practices and processes as they arise. It has also meant locating journalism practice within complex cultural frameworks that can range from very broad (societal) and very narrow (subcultural). As journalism has evolved at a rapid pace, incorporating new platforms, technologies, and forms of mediation, cultural inquiry has interrogated emerging collective codes of knowledge and belief systems, including those which are tacit. It has also broadened understandings of where journalism 'takes shape', extending understandings of its construction beyond the newsroom (Zelizer 2004) to the boundary areas where meaning is constructed and contested, amongst for example newsmakers, the audience and public. This thesis argues that social media should be added to the emerging spaces of news production and journalism in need of attention and that analysis of the implications of the expanding role of social media in the leading 'legacy' locales for news production - such as the news agency - is crucial. The following section explains why culture is a useful concept for considering social media practice in GNA news production.

3.4 Cultures of Journalism

Culture is a complex and slippery term that has eluded any form of single or fixed definition but is used widely in scholarship and is central to the field of cultural studies. The foundations of the concept of culture are conflicting and disputed so to avoid confusion (and a lengthy discussion of its potential meanings), a working explanation of the way 'culture' is conceived in this research is necessary. Cultural studies builds from the conception of knowledge as socially and subjectively constituted, viewing culture as produced by all social actors thus foregrounding everyday life as fundamentally important and socio-historic context as highly relevant. This field of study explores the relationships between cultural practices, everyday life, material, economic, political, geographical and historical contexts[14] and seeks to understand the dynamics of power in society through the study of cultural processes. Hollifield, Kosicki and Becker suggest that "definitions generally recognize that culture is historically and socially constructed, includes shared practices, knowledge and values that experienced members of a group transmit to newcomers, and is used to shape a group's processes, material output and ability to survive" (2001: 94). Culture can be seen in this way as a medium through which social, political and historical meanings are communicated and understood. Though culture is a dynamic and disputed concept, it can be used as a unit of analysis. Analysing cultural research into journalism, Barbie Zelizer refers to it as "a phenomenon of concerted action that uses conventional understandings to guide members of collectives in doing things in consensual ways (2004: 176).

In this thesis, 'culture' is seen to be constructed and continually re-constructed *by people* through a *set of shared values, norms, practices and expectations* and it is argued here that culture *exists in practice* (Deuze 2006). In the case of this research, those people in question are GNA newsworkers who, though they each have different cultural identities and histories, share a particular set of values, norms, practices and expectations that play out in practice (newswork) and shape them both collectively and individually.

Recent scholarship has used the concept of culture to discuss changes at a societal level: Manovich has written about a culture shift "to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution, and communication" (2001: 19) and points to an "information culture", whilst Lévy refers to "cyberculture" (2001), Castells to "Internet culture" (2001), and Deuze to "digital culture" (2006). These approaches draw attention to the

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[14] As exemplified by the field's leading international journal Cultural Studies.

wider context in which news organisations exist and highlight an increasing focus on the Internet and online environments across disciplines. They also intersect with studies that employ the concept of networks as a central analytical tool (see Chapter 2) and can be useful in framing and informing the interpretation of changes within journalism. However culture can also be used as an alternative lens through which to view journalism in context, attending to the collective ideals and norms held by professional groups as well as their activities, practices and routines. For example, looking at professional culture and technological change, Domingo (2008) found that the professional culture of traditional journalism displays a strong inertia in online newsrooms that prevents news organisations from developing most of the ideals of interactivity, as they do not fit standardised news production routines. His results suggested that "despite the diversity of definitions and strategies regarding interactivity among the studied online newsrooms, the professional culture of traditional journalism prevails over the myth and turns it into a problem to deal with instead of an opportunity for change" (2008: 681).

The concept of culture allows for various levels of analysis to be simultaneously conducted, providing a complex and multi-dimensional account of news production. In attending to the focus of this research (i.e. social media practice at GNAs), the concept of culture must however be refined to foreground its relation to *practice* and to *context*. The latter refers in particular to the context of socio-technical infrastructure with which culture is engaged in a mutually shaping relationship. For this, the concept of a 'culture of practice' has been developed.

3.5 Conceptualising Cultures of Practice

Community of Practice (CoP) is a concept that has been used in education studies to represent a social theory of learning that places learning in the context of lived experience and social practice (Wenger 1998). The primary unit of analysis from this perspective "is neither the individual nor social institutions but rather the informal 'communities of practice' that people form as they pursue shared enterprises over time" (Wenger 1998: 3). This approach provides a broad framework for exploring the relationships between social practice, meaning, identity and community which can be very useful in the study of journalism as a social process that occurs "in context" and in

practice, i.e. not in isolation from socio-technical environment nor from shared cultural constructs. The dimensions by which a CoP defines itself according to Wenger are:

- What it is about—its joint enterprise as understood and continually renegotiated by its members
- How it functions—the relationships of mutual engagement that bind members together into a social entity
- What capability it has produced—the shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artifacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time. (Wenger 1998: 2)

The CoP approach is very broad as it considers learning to be a process of social participation that occurs *everywhere* in relation to others. As such, communities of practice are prolific and pervasive in society, within for example the family and workplace but also in informal and ad-hoc social groupings. In this way, everybody belongs to multiple communities of practice, which may overlap and interrelate and people engage with them to differing degrees. Although CoP was developed as an approach to theorising and understanding learning, it can usefully contribute to understanding practice – in particular through its focus on social participation as a core constitutive element which links the individual to others and to the community.

In the context of journalism, communities of practice can be identified within news production contexts and this concept can be useful in breaking down the seemingly cohesive 'whole' of an organisation (with its overarching 'organisational ideology' and official structures) into meaningful groups (or units of analysis) based not on arbitrary job titles but on shared experiences, goals, resources and relationships. For example, newsworkers within a news agency can be seen to be participants in numerous and often overlapping communities of practice, some of which extend beyond the borders of the agency (e.g. a journalism CoP, which links them to others who self-define as journalists and which has similarities with journalism's 'professional culture') whilst others are specific groupings within the organisation (e.g. input/output CoPs, desk editor, field reporter or manager CoPs etc.). GNA newsworkers participate in an 'organisational community of practice' in which they work together with common aims and goals for the same news agency after having gone through similar recruitment, learning and training experiences. More broadly than this, GNAs share a remit and industry role as wholesalers of international news to the retail news industry. As such, they share many similarities,

particularly regarding the organisation of news production and the nature of coverage and their newsworkers share a common identity, which recognises how their roles differ in many ways from the wider journalistic community. This 'news agency CoP' has parallels with a culture in that over time, newsworkers come to share similar beliefs, values, ethics, perspectives, practices and routines. This occurs through formal and informal forms of socialisation, including recruiting, induction, training, learning through practice etc., and impacts on every aspect of the news production context. This research however considers there to be important differences between the terms 'community' and 'culture' that make the concept of *'culture of practice'* more suitable for understanding news production, whilst building on the initial concept of CoP – particularly its insistence on shared practice as a prerequisite for development. Firstly, 'community' places focus on people – a community is a social unit in which people share common factors, including values. The concept of culture (as applied here) also involves people but shifts focus beyond the human to include other material and immaterial constitutive elements, including artefacts and technology. People are 'members' of a community or they are not. Whereas people engage in and with a culture and this engagement is non-binary and dynamic. Furthermore, culture implies the imbricated and embedded nature of these groups of people and their actions and interactions in context.

As outlined above, Wenger's definition of community of practice includes its *joint enterprise* as understood and continually renegotiated by its members; the relationships of *mutual engagement* that bind members together into a social entity; and the *shared repertoire* of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artifacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time (Wenger 1998: 2). The concept of 'culture of practice' then places this in context by insisting on elucidating the socio-technical infrastructure on which these elements rest. Cultures of practice are fundamentally linked to the context in which they arise. Technological innovations can be seen to shape cultures of practice, whilst at the same time being shaped by them and by the actors involved in using any new technological artefact. Newsworkers do not work in isolation from their colleagues or their context and therefore this context must be interrogated in order to explain their journalism practice and any change to it.

The culture of practice emerging in relation to social media in GNAs can be analysed by exploring the set of norms, values, practices and expectations concerning the way newsworkers should and do act and interact with social media technologies and with other people through these technologies. This should be investigated through research into the understandings and practices of the newsworkers who are part of this culture of

practice as well as through the formal and informal forms of organising practice that have been developed to shape and structure it. Cultures of practice are difficult to analyse because of their multifaceted and macro nature. However they are built on identifiable *sociotechnical infrastructures* made up of *artefacts, practices* and *social arrangements* which can be more easily identified and analysed. Infrastructure subtends the culture of practice – i.e. underpins and supports it and in doing so shapes it. The emergent culture of practice builds on established infrastructure that pre-dates digitally-networked and web-based developments but is renegotiating and reconfiguring this infrastructure in novel ways. Explaining this relationship will enable a deeper understanding of the changes occurring in global news agencies.

This cultures of practice approach is situated in a growing body of work that is beginning to cross disciplinary boundaries in order to better account for the role of technology in journalism as a response to journalism studies' dispersed and commonly technologically determinist attempts to address issues of technology in news production (see Chapter 2). The following section discusses the concept of infrastructure, used predominantly in science and technology studies (STS), and explains its relationship to cultures of practice and its analytical purpose for this research.

3.6 Infrastructures: Underpinning Cultures of Practice

It is argued here that supporting any (culture of) practice is infrastructure. Infrastructure is commonly viewed as that which runs underneath actual structures, upon which something else rides, or works – a platform of sorts (Star and Bowker 2006) but contrary to the static implications of these metaphorical definitions, it is a fundamentally relational concept that emerges for people in practice, connected to activities and structures, only becoming infrastructure in relation to organised practices (Star and Ruhleder 1996: 113). Star and Bowker argue that "infrastructure is not absolute, but relative to working conditions. It never stands apart from the people who design, maintain and use it" (2006: 230). They point out the tendency of infrastructure to disappear except when breaking down. Thus they ask, not *what* is an infrastructure but *when* is an infrastructure?[15] Star and Bowker discuss this concept in the context of new media,

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[15] In a similar tradition and with reference to Yrjo Engestrom from "When Is a Tool?" (1990).

arguing that understanding the development and design of infrastructure is crucial in the networked, information convergent society of today. In STS, the study of infrastructure has tended to look at its importance in the design process (Bowker 2005, Latour and Hermant 1998, Star and Ruhleder 1996). Less common is the analysis of infrastructure in appropriation and use of technology in context, which underpins this thesis.

This research works with Star and Ruhleder's astute description of the salient features of infrastructure (1996: 113), reproduced in full below:

• *Embeddedness.* Infrastructure is "sunk" into, inside of, other structures, social arrangements and technologies;

• *Transparency.* Infrastructure is transparent to use, in the sense that it does not have to be reinvented each time or assembled for each task, but invisibly supports those tasks;

• *Reach or scope.* This may be either spatial or temporal - infrastructure has reach beyond a single event or one-site practice;

• *Learned as part of membership.* The taken-for-grantedness of artifacts and organizational arrangements is a sine qua non of membership in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1992; Star, in press). Strangers and outsiders encounter infrastructure as a target object to be learned about. New participants acquire a naturalized familiarity with its objects as they become members;

• *Links with conventions of practice.* Infrastructure both shapes and is shaped by the conventions of a community of practice, e.g. the ways that cycles of day-night work are affected by and affect electrical power rates and needs. Generations of typists have learned the QWERTY keyboard; its limitations are inherited by the computer keyboard and thence by the design of today's computer furniture (Becker 1982);

• *Embodiment of standards.* Modified by scope and often by conflicting conventions, infrastructure takes on transparency by plugging into other infrastructures and tools in a standardized fashion.

• *Built on an installed base.* Infrastructure does not grow de novo: it wrestles with the "inertia of the installed base" and inherits strengths and limitations from that base. Optical fibers run along old railroad lines; new systems are designed for backward compatibility; and failing to account

for these constraints may be fatal or distorting to new development processes (Monteiro, et al. 1994);

• *Becomes visible upon breakdown.* The normally invisible quality of working infrastructure becomes visible when it breaks; the server is down, the bridge washes out, there is a power blackout. Even when there are back-up mechanisms or procedures, their existence further highlights the now-visible infrastructure.

This final point is particularly important for this research – that infrastructure *becomes visible upon breakdown.* Numerous scholars have discussed the challenges to traditional journalism practice that social media present (see Chapter 2), - challenging amongst other things traditional news organisations' claims to be the first and the most authoritative sources of newsworthy information, challenging their sourcing and attribution practices, levels of transparency and ideological approach to reporting. GNAs have, like other news organisations, struggled to respond to these challenges but the processes of change that they have set in motion have brought the established infrastructure and the cultures of practice which it supports to the surface, questioning their legitimacy and their composition. Conceiving of these points of disruption as emblematic of an ideological incompatibility between the professional control exerted by news agencies and open participation afforded by social media (Lewis 2012), this research asks: Which elements of global news agency infrastructure have become visible through their incompatibility with the architecture and affordances of social media? Are new forms of understanding and new practices emerging to resolve this tension? What form do they take? What structures, frameworks, mechanisms and discourses are being put in place to integrate social media into news production? What does this mean for the socio-technical infrastructure of global news agencies? What might this mean for the global news agency journalistic process, newsworkers and news products? What implications might this have for the global news agency culture of practice and how might this culture be simultaneously shaping infrastructure? Change in these circumstances can be identified and evidenced by analysing external literature and internal documents on how GNAs function that predate the research in order to provide an understanding of processes, practices and culture before social media. This provides a baseline from which comparisons can be made with contemporary documentation and accounts. Newsworkers can also be asked to provide accounts of, and reflections on change for the researcher to critically assess. Armed with this knowledge, the researcher can identify and evidence

instances and examples of internal disruption, in particular by honing in on elements of GNA infrastructure that have become visible due to incompatibility with social media.

For Star and Ruhleder, technology "is both engine and barrier for change; both customizable and rigid; both inside and outside organizational practices. It is product and process," (1996: 111). Analysis of social media technology in a GNA's process of news production must then be considered in relation to existing technology and technological assemblages as well as existing social and cultural frameworks. This can be best achieved by analysing GNAs in terms of their 'social media infrastructure'; constituted of the social media technologies (*artefacts)* used, the associated *practices* and *social arrangements* and importantly, the relationships between them. This can then be considered in relation to the wider (pre-)existing infrastructure to contextualise the findings. In this way, understanding infrastructure will help explain changing cultures of practice at GNAs.

The following section outlines shortcomings in the study of technology in news production and explicates this thesis's approach to mitigating technological determinism.

3.7 Technological Determinism in Journalism

Technological determinism is a way of thinking about the relationship between technology and society, which Sally Wyatt (2008) claims has two parts: the first is that technological developments take place outside society, independently of social, economic, and political forces; the second is that technological change causes or determines social change (an assertion backed by MacKenzie and Wajcman 1985; 1999). Wyatt claims that technological determinism is "imbued with the notion that technological progress equals social progress" and that this simplistic account resonates with most people's experience of technology and so appears logical to users of technology, meaning it is thus perpetuated in practice. Technologically determinist accounts ignore the 'social' in the 'technological' and vice versa and recognising this, the social shaping movement asserted that the technological is constitutive of society whilst also being a product of it (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1999: 23). Boczkowski criticised the tendency of much online journalism research to "build analysis upon a usually taken-for-granted technologically deterministic matrix" (2002: 279). He was claiming this in 2002 following a number of studies throughout the 1990s to early 2000s that were uncritically optimistic (Pavlik 2001) or pessimistic about the impacts of 'new' media on

journalism, leading to utopian/dystopian accounts that were not reflective of the complex situations evolving across diverse journalistic contexts. His comments sit within a layer of research that sought to respond to this by explicitly addressing what it saw as technological determinism (e.g. Domingo 2006, Deuze 2007) and which has led to more nuanced and contextualised approaches to analysis (see Boczkowski's own review of this literature in Mitchelstein and Boczkowski 2009). Technologically determinist accounts of subsequent changes such as the spread of WiFi, mobile technologies and social media continue to pervade media coverage - a pertinent example being the Arab Spring, discussed widely as a "social media revolution" (Cottle 2011, Hirst 2012) - but a wave of constructivist research has steered much scholarly discussion of technologies in journalism away from this form of determinism.

The level at which newsworkers engage with many technologies does not necessarily require knowledge or consideration of the design and creation process behind them. This in turn can be seen to encourage unquestioning adaptation to the requirements of the technology. This view, it is argued, negates human choice and intervention as influences on technology and implies that people are not responsible for the technologies they make and use, as those technologies are designed and created outside of social interests. The idea that workers involved in the creative process of invention, design and engineering function independently of the rest of society implies the overarching technological rationality and neutrality of technology.

One type of technological determinism, described by Wyatt as 'justificatory', seems particularly relevant to the understandings of technology in news production (Wyatt 2008). Wyatt believes that actors use this type of technologically determinist argument to justify actions, for example employers use it to justify downsizing and reorganisation, and she claims that it lies behind the managerial belief that computerisation will automatically result in "productivity gains and social transformation" (ibid: 174). Several studies have indicated that journalists often hold views that can be described as technologically determinist, frequently invoking 'technology as a self-sufficient explanatory factor' when reflecting on change in their profession (Örnebring 2010). Örnebring states that "journalists in general seem to view technology and technological development as inevitable, impersonal forces that directly cause many of the changes taking place within journalism", and as such, they view these changes as *technology-driven'* (ibid: 58 - emphasis in original). Örnebring argues that this tendency has roots in the tangible nature of technology to newsworkers and the historical processes of the integration of technology into work practices, which leads him

to advocate the analysis of journalism as labour (alongside others such as Deuze 2008 and Marjoribanks, 2000a). In using *labour process theory* as explained in Braverman's work (1974), technology is portrayed as an agent of capitalism, meaning that changes (associated with new technologies) "are not so much driven by technological necessity as by the capitalist necessity to reduce overall labour costs" (Örnebring 2010: 64). This research in contrast approaches technology in news production from a mutual shaping perspective.

3.8 Social Constructivism and Mutual Shaping

This framework builds from a mutual shaping perspective, which considers technological development and social practices to be co-constructive (Boczkowski, 2004a, Lievrouw and Livingstone, 2006). The term mutual shaping is borne out of the concept of social shaping, which derived from science and technology studies as a critique of technological determinism. Countering earlier interpretations of technology's 'independent influence', several research strands have proposed notions of 'social constructivism' which "contends that technology does not have any influence that can be gauged independently of human interpretation" (Grint and Woolgar, 1997: 10). Social constructivism assumes that "reality" is made in the process of our attempts to apprehend it and as such shares a fundamental perspective with many of the earlier sociological and cultural studies approaches already discussed. This perspective sees all knowledge, and all knowledge-claims to be socially constructed, including in the fields of science and technology (Pinch and Bijker 1984). Social shaping has been used in communication research and particularly in new media research to challenge linear accounts of technological innovation in which technology is the cause and society or social practice is the effect. This approach has become a dominant perspective in numerous disciplines but has been criticised for leaning too far towards social determinism and subsequently downplaying the role technology exerts on society. In contrast, diffusion of innovations theory (Rogers 1995) emerged in communication research as an approach to describing how ideas or practices are introduced or adopted in a social system and developed (particularly in sociological and economic fields) to analyse the diffusion of new ICTs with a focus on how networks of relationships and shared meaning shape social action (Lievrouw 2006: 252). It models the dynamics of technology adoption and uses but has

been criticised for focussing on effects or impacts of innovations in a 'pro-innovation bias' (Rogers 1995), treating innovations as given.

Boczkowski argues that "diffusion scholarship has tended to overlook the degree to which the adoption of media artifacts is tied to their social construction" and "social shaping research has largely neglected the extent to which the development of artifacts is linked to their planned and actual diffusion" (2004a: 255; See also Lievrouw 2006). In response to the perceived shortcomings of these perspectives, Boczkowski argues instead for a 'mutual shaping' approach, which sees technological and social change as "two sides of the same innovation coin" (ibid), and suggests that by emphasising 1) the simultaneous pursuit of interdependent technological and social transformations, 2) the ongoing character of this process, and 3) the importance of the historical context in which it unfolds will provide a more encompassing account of new media evolution.

All three perspectives seek to contextualise technology within social practice, explore the consequences of adoption and use of technology, and foreground information and communication flows but the mutual shaping approach is preferred in this research as it strives to analyse simultaneous social and technological transformations as interlinked and interdependent, accounting for both context and the dynamic nature of change. By employing a mutual shaping perspective, this research emphasises the co-constitution of technology and society and argues that the processes of construction, adoption and use of artefacts should not be considered independently. Boczkowski argues that "the shaping of artifacts should not be seen as disconnected from how their diffusion is intended to unfold and how it actually occurs, and their diffusion should not be examined in isolation from processes of technical construction that do not stop when artifacts are adopted" (2004a: 255-256). Much of a technology's intended affordances are inscribed during the design process but mutual shaping contends that technologies are also shaped in use. In this way technology is shaping peoples' practices and perspectives whilst simultaneously being shaped by them. Mutual shaping considers the possibility of transformations occurring at multiple points in the shaping and diffusion of an artefact – even after design processes assert forms of closure on a technology, they can still be reinvented (though this is a possibility and not a given) and "partial outcomes at an earlier stage can influence events at a later phase" (Boczkowski 2004a: 257).

This research looks at the use of a particular type of technology (social media) by a particular group of people (newsworkers) in a particular context (global news agencies), striving to achieve a particular goal (the production of wholesale news). As such, it strives to explicate the intersection of the architectures and affordances of social media with the

infrastructure and culture of GNAs in the instantiation of professional news production. In this way it can highlight how use of technology is mediated by cultural context and cultural context is mediated by technology. This approach does not negate the idea of consequences arising from the introduction and use of technology but highlights how these consequences are not inevitable impacts deriving from the technology, rather they are shaped by (and shaping of) social context. The consequences of how social media is used in GNAs are shaped in part by how the newsworkers and these organisations perceive these technologies - their affordances and role within journalism. By looking at the practices through which newsworkers working in GNAs have appropriated social media - which challenge their established ways of producing news, i.e. their existing socio-technical infrastructure and culture - this research empirically examines the evolutionary processes of change contributing to the broader changes in journalism that are so often referred to as 'revolutionary'.

Social shaping, diffusion of innovations, and mutual shaping approaches often take a historical view of the development and evolution of a technology, its adoption and use[16]. However, the focus of analysis for this research is the fairly recently initiated and ongoing process of adoption and use of social media technology, which though deeply embedded in historical context and shaped by the legacy of the existing environment, is currently under construction and evolving at a rapid pace. This dynamic nature makes studying social media at GNAs difficult and to some degree time-specific. This research, though consciously historically contextualised, does not focus on historical development. It is similar to the approach often taken in Organisation Studies to explore how technological innovations are tied to changes in organisational structures and work practices (Hargadon and Sutton 1997; Orlikowski 2000; Rosenkopf and Tushman 1998; Yates 1993), which interrogate how new technologies are shaped by and shape organisational contexts, with the aim of foregrounding key processes and mechanisms of change.

Social media is a form of new media. In order to situate new media in context, Lievrouw and Livingstone consider them in relation to technological, social, political and economic factors and describe new media as "infrastructures with three components: The *artefacts or devices* used to communicate or convey information; the *activities and practices* in which people engage to communicate or share information; and the *social arrangements or organizational forms* that develop around those devices and practices"

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[16] For example Boczkowski (2004a) looked at Videotex, Lievrouw and Livingstone (2006) at E-mail and Videotex.

(2006: 2, emphasis in original). This approach focuses on the dynamic links and interdependencies among artefacts, practices and social arrangements – not prioritising the study of one of these elements above another but rather analysing the relationship between them. Exploring organisational processes which shape and are shaped by new artefacts can provide a situated and contextualised view of the adoption and use of a new technology. It is useful to consider social media in GNAs this way as it foregrounds the links between continuity and change and the mechanisms by which the balance between these two factors is regulated.

Lievrouw and Livingstone state that "people always have choices about how technologies are created, understood and used" but assert that technologies that become "extensive, embedded and taken for granted… can also constrain or limit the range of possible choices… Thus technology, action and social context are inseparable phenomena, each influencing the other" (2006: 4). In this way, every technology allows for a certain range of interpretations, both enabling and constraining use at the same time. The range of interpretations it affords is shaped by the discourses that are ascribed to it by not only designers, but also users and key stakeholders - thus, technologies are often adopted and used in ways that were not anticipated in the design process. Though dynamic, artefacts, practices and social arrangements are however not infinitely flexible. They, and the relationships between them can and do "become routine, established, institutionalized, and fixed to various extents, and so become taken for granted in everyday life" (Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006: 3).

Boczkowski states that "interdependent cultural and material changes do not proceed in a historical vacuum, but are influenced by the legacy of processes that preceded them." (2004a: 257). When researching the use of a new technology in an existing context such as that of the news agency, the pre-existing infrastructure must be considered in order to take full account of factors that shape understanding and use. In this way, the actions of newsworkers and managers in the 'construction' of social media in GNA journalism (i.e. what social media are to them and how they may be used) will be influenced by existing infrastructures and compatibility with this existing context. This may arise in the form of making social media work with established technological standards, ethical and quality standards, work processes etc. Boczkowski (ibid) notes the difficulty of eliciting the "embodiments of historical legacies that affect novel artifacts… since they tend to become an invisible aspect of people's routines (Bowker and Star, 1999)." Thus it is important to be sensitive to historical processes and the influence of context on social media practice as well as the influences of these technologies on that

existing infrastructure. A case study approach allows for the combination of these factors. The research maintains an open stance to understanding changes in the balance of determination and contingency in the evolution of social media at GNAs, understanding that there may be a reduction in newsworkers' agency as the technological system(s) with which they are working become stabilised and exert an increasingly strong shaping force on practice and social arrangements (a form of determination[17]), whilst the evolution of these systems is always subject to unforeseen inputs, influences and changes (contingency).

In order to understand social media practice at GNAs and explicate the culture of practice developing around social media in news production, the architecture and affordances of social media must be outlined and discussed. In doing this, pertinent questions can be formulated about their relationship to the existing GNA infrastructure (see Chapter 2 for explanation of the agencies) and the implications for GNA news production.

3.9 Taking Social Media Seriously: Architectures and Affordances

The following section will broadly discuss the architecture and affordances of social media and outline the discourses that surround them, whilst honing in on more nuanced discussion of the two industry leaders - Twitter and Facebook – and their relevance for the study of news production. Chapter 2 sketched out the burgeoning field of social media research in the study of journalism, and stressed that these studies share no singular accepted definition of social media and often fail to discuss their complex architectures and affordances, which leads to a somewhat superficial analysis of their role in news production. When scholars refer to social media and/or SNSs as 'participatory', 'interactive' and 'collaborative' technologies, they are conflating the affordances of social media in order to generalise about their social uses. It is therefore necessary to elaborate on the architectural composition of social media, their affordances and the cultures of practice which form in relation to them.

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[17] See Abernathy and Utterback, (1978) on "dominant design" and Hughes (1969; 1987; 1994) on "momentum" for concepts regarding the reduction in people's agency once the initial shaping of an artefact achieves closure.

The term 'architecture' has been used as a metaphor to describe the structuring of code and networks in digital environments such as social media. Much like the physical and material architecture of buildings which people inhabit, the architecture of social media gives them shape and meaning in the digital space. It is important to note that these technologies are constructed by people and cultural values are encoded into them as Jones explains: "(t)he social is encoded into materiality and diffused as a wider socio-technical network, which shapes (and is shaped by) practice in the context of active use" (2013: 263). The term affordance, taken originally from ecological psychology and particularly Gibson (1977) and later developed in Human-Computer Interaction studies into "perceived" and "actual" affordances by Norman (1988; 1998; 1999), has become commonplace in studies of technology (see McGrenere and Ho 2000 for a full discussion of the differences between the two aforementioned approaches and additionally Gaver's 1991 approach). This thesis's framework argues that an affordance is an action possibility. A technology can be seen to offer certain potentials for action, which may or may not be perceived by a person at a particular instant in time, but notionally exist nonetheless. Affordances do not exist 'within' an artefact or technology, but are *relational* to context. Social media are software but their use relies on hardware and devices, therefore possible actions afforded by them involve physical interaction with devices and interaction with the software interface. Social media use also relies on the user's understanding of relevant abstract concepts, such as the network represented by the software and the interactions and relationships it affords.

Scholars are increasingly exploring the architecture of social media and the affordances these architectures support, arguing that they are pivotal to understanding digitally mediated practices in a variety of contexts (boyd 2010, Jones 2013, Langlois et al. 2009; Langlois 2011; Papacharissi 2009; 2010, Zhang and Wang 2010). Communication technologies such as social media afford certain action possibilities and not others and therefore shape news production through the practices they afford. Papacharissi draws comparison between the architecture of social media (as virtual spaces) and the architecture of physical spaces, proposing that the architecture suggests and enables particular modes of interaction (2009). Certain cultural practices in this way are engendered by the architectures of social media. However technology can also be seen to be configured in use or in interpretive social practice (Grint and Woolgar 1992; 1997). In this way, technologies are designed and configured in certain ways but also interpreted by users in social context. Grint and Woolgar do not deny that technologies have effects in the social world, but they argue that effects are not reducible to the nature of the

technology and should be seen instead as the outcome of social processes of interpretation combined with the persuasive attributes of technical capacities. Thus 'effects' on news production and content only arise when journalists unite with social media - the effect exists only as a result of the fusion of the technology with specific human actors, which occurs in context. To break this into component parts for the sake of analysis and analyse the 'effects of social media' is to misunderstand the nature of the event as a holistic process (Grint and Woolgar 1992: 374). As such, to understand the impacts of new technologies on existing news production processes and journalism more broadly, research must take as its focus the nexus of the social, cultural and technological journalistic context with any new technology's architecture and affordances.

Situating this approach in the study of GNA culture of practice leads us to ask: Which possibilities for action involving social media are most salient (i.e. are perceived affordances) to newsworkers and what practices do they thus enable for newsworkers in GNAs? Which practices does this constrain? How are newsworkers interpreting and negotiating the affordances of social media within a GNA culture of practice? Are GNAs encouraging a particular interpretive strategy for understanding social media in news production? If so, of what does this consist?

3.9.1 SNSs: Architecture and Affordances

Social media are digitally-networked technologies which have reorganised how information flows within and beyond news organisations and have renegotiated newsworkers' relationships with others and with the information and content that is at the core of their work (see 2.4). Digital structures are built out of bits (binary digits) – a basic unit of information that can have only one of two values. Mitchell (1995) and Lessig (2006) stress the ways in which digital architectures are structural forces, ruled by code, which in these contexts configures digitally-networked environments. Bits allow digital content to be duplicated, compressed and manipulated and they are easy to store, transmit, distribute and search (boyd 2010). boyd argues that four affordances emerge out of the properties of bits and play a significant role in configuring what she terms networked publics - "publics that have been transformed by networked media, its properties, and its potential" (boyd 2010: 42). They are:

Persistence: online expressions are automatically recorded and archived.

Replicability: content made out of bits can be duplicated.

Scalability: the potential visibility of content in networked publics is great.

Searchability: content in networked publics can be accessed through search (boyd 2010: 46).

Unlike unmediated acts which are ephemeral, social media make recording and storing communicative acts persistent. This allows for synchronous and asynchronous interaction but as a result of the enduring nature of content, data can be taken out of the original context in which it was created. boyd explains that this is partially due to the architecture of the Internet upon which social media operates, where distribution requires copies and records for transmission and processing. This enables newsworkers to locate content and identify and view interaction between people of interest as it is occurring or at a later date, which has proven very useful in researching and newsgathering. It can however also make it difficult for newsworkers to understand the context in which the original interaction took place or the original content was generated, potentially leading to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Content is also easily replicable and copies abound in social media environments with no easy way (and sometimes no way) to differentiate an original from its duplicate or the original from that which has been altered. For the gathering of UGC and distributing of proprietary content by newsworkers, this can cause problems with important journalistic practices such as the verification, authentication and tracking of content.

Social media widens access to information and events (or reproductions of events) and affords the possibility of extensive visibility (though it does not guarantee it) - thus it is scalable. This scalability affords opportunities for newsworkers to speak directly (i.e. not through their organisation's official publications and mechanisms for interaction) to a large amount of people: to elicit information from them and crowdsource, to deliberate publicly and discuss with them, to distribute content and interpret it with them. It also gives organisations the ability to interact directly with individuals and publics in a new social context. Finally, the traces that social media technologies leave enable the search of content and people. This is incredibly useful for news production, which is premised on the discovery and capture of relevant information. Elements of social life that were previously invisible or undocumented are increasingly shared and archived by social media.

As outlined in Chapter 2, Twitter and Facebook have been identified as the most popular and significant social media amongst both journalists and the public and can both be classified as social network sites (SNSs). Ellison and boyd (2013:158) argue that:

> A social network site is a *networked communication platform* in which participants 1) have *uniquely identifiable profiles* that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-level data; 2) can *publicly articulate connections* that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce and/or interact with *streams of user-generated content* provided by their connections on the site.

Donath and boyd describe SNSs as 'public displays of connection' (2004: 72), highlighting how they make visible the nature of social networks and provide 'social context'. These public displays of connection help users navigate digitally remediated social context by providing identity signals, which enable them to verify other users' identities and gauge for instance their reliability or trustworthiness. The centrality of public displays of connection to social network sites has several important implications for news production: 1) it makes connections between news producers, news makers and news consumers visible, 2) it makes any elements of newswork conducted using SNSs transparent beyond the newsroom and organisation, 3) it places communication into the 'social context' created by the technologies. Walther et al. (2010) describe visible 'posts' as important 'tie' signs between users, considering how awareness of public visibility (as opposed to more private forms of communication) shapes the nature of the content and the construction of the message. In news production this means that interaction through organisational social media accounts or individual newsworkers' accounts is influenced by the medium in which it takes place in ways that are as yet unexplored. Through aggregating contexts and connections from the physical world in singular digitally-networked spaces, boyd argues that social network sites are effectively 'collapsing context' (2008; 2011) and that they thus represent a key site of analysis for the intersection of digital and physical practices, which exist in a mutually constitutive relationship. This environment has in some ways bypassed, brought down or reconfigured boundaries between people. For journalism, this has been most significant in the blurring of boundaries between public and private, professional and non-professional, news producer and user/consumer.

Scholars are increasingly taking a critical look at how the architecture and affordances of social media shape everyday life, communication and interaction, exploring the implications of this form of mediated practice (Jones 2013). They are finding patterns of use that can be to some extent explained with reference to the design, architecture, affordances and symbolic coding of social media and exploring the relationship between how technological materiality is culturally expressed and how technology is used in practice (ibid). SNSs share similarities in structure and capabilities, leading to common practices and cultures. However SNSs each have particular modes of sociality shaped by the forms of networked connectivity and opportunities for networked interactivity they afford, which are themselves framed by the cultural coding of features and the design languages of the sites (Jones 2013, Van Dijck 2012). The 'architecture' of a digital space thus has a tangible impact upon how action and interaction are organised within it (boyd 2010, Jones 2013, Papacharissi 2009; 2010, Zhang and Wang 2010). For example, Hermida argues that Twitter privileges communication that is "often event-based and event-driven, much like the content that traditionally makes the news," actively encouraging "the here and now" (2013: 4). Citing the company's explanation of how topics are highlighted as trending, Hermida shows that immediacy is key to the algorithm which identifies topic popularity. Siapera, citing Smythe (2012) conceives of social media and other platforms that operate in the space between news producers and the public as 'infomediaries', arguing that infomediaries "end up imposing their own rules and values on content producers" (2013: 12) and links this to the increased importance of distribution over production.

Consideration of the affordances of SNS - and to some extent also the site-specific affordances of Facebook and Twitter - is therefore necessary for understanding social media practice in news production. By incorporating this approach, this framework focuses attention on how integration of SNSs into the infrastructure of global news agencies is shaping and changing practice. Drawing from these leading-edge approaches, this research combines analysis of the socio-technical architecture of social media with analysis of the infrastructure of GNAs to elucidate this key intersection and explore the context from which practices and cultures of practice develop and are sustained. The following section concludes the chapter by explaining how this framework is applied in data collection and analysis and by detailing the questions and issues this approach brings to light in relation to GNA news production.

3.10 Application of the Framework

This framework builds from the understanding that structural socio-material and cultural characteristics of the GNA context must be analysed in relation to each other because cultures of practice are constituted not in a vacuum but in practice in relation to people and artefacts. Assuming the 'mutual shaping' of technological and social developments, the application of this framework focuses on identifying and analysing three key intersections of the "dynamic relationship between technology, social actors and context factors" (Domingo 2006: 296). These are 1) formal organisational guidelines, 2) organisational social media practice and 3) newsworkers' understanding of and described use of social media in journalism. Considered through the lens of cultures of practice, each focus for analysis represents a different but associated area of change in GNA infrastructure, all of which are being shaped by the architectures and affordances of social media. The empirical investigation of these infrastructural developments constructs a scaffold on which to make theoretical insights into cultural shifts in GNAs and the relationship between digitally-networked technologies such as social media and newswork.

In Chapter 5, the types of activity conducted by the agencies on their organisational SNS accounts (on Facebook and Twitter) are analysed. SNSs are a key new addition to the technical infrastructure of news production and analysis of how the agencies are using them elucidates organisational approaches to integrating and negotiating the architecture and affordances of social media into existing infrastructure, which in turn sheds light on emerging changes to practice and conceptions of news production.

In Chapter 6, GNA social media guidelines are analysed to understand their role as an organisational mechanism that has been strategically added to the existing GNA informational infrastructure with the purpose of a) formalising professional and organisational imperatives in the form of written documents and b) structuring newsworkers' understandings and use of social media. They represent the conscious framing of debate around these technologies and are constructed to ensure that the 'official' interpretation of social media is dominant in the production context. Applying this chapter's analytical framework enables assessment of the agencies' discursive framing of the architecture and affordances of social media in relation to established cultural practices of newswork. As such it is a pertinent and important tool for highlighting points of conflict, compatibility and compromise between existing news

production infrastructure and social media technologies, which are shaping newswork and the professional culture of practice.

Chapter 7 then interrogates further changes to the GNA culture of practice by investigating newsworkers' understandings and perceptions of the aforementioned new additions to infrastructure (i.e. social media technologies and guidelines), and their described use of them. This enables the researcher to gain insight into a wide range of individual approaches to social media whilst relating these to the emerging shared norms, values, practices and conventions that are becoming solidified in the culture of practice. Following this, a discussion chapter (Chapter 8) draws together findings from the analyses in Chapter 5, 6, and 7 in order to evaluate the relationship between each set of changes to socio-technical infrastructure (new social media artefacts, associated practices and social arrangements). It returns to the concepts employed in the analytical framework of cultures of practice to tease out key insights from the research and discuss them whilst also assessing the usefulness of the framework.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that newsworkers in global news agencies operate as part of a distinct culture, characterised by widely accepted journalistic norms and values such as objectivity, impartiality, accuracy, reliability but also shaped by their specific context and practices. This complex and interrelated combination of practices, routines, knowledge, norms and values, norms is referred to as their *culture of practice*. The GNA culture of practice has many established and longstanding elements but is also dynamic and evolves as its constituent parts change. Cultures of practice are difficult to analyse because of their multifaceted and macro nature however they are built on identifiable *socio-material infrastructures*. These infrastructures are made up of artefacts, practices, people, and their social arrangements and can be usefully analysed in order to explicate the way things work, and change, in an organisation. When significant changes are instituted at an infrastructural level – in this case the introduction of social media into the news production process – new practices and social arrangements can develop, which may alter the prevailing culture of practice. The culture of practice is constructed through a *co-constitutive* relationship with infrastructure and therefore is not only shaped by it but also shapes the infrastructure itself. Social media have their own particular *architectures*

and related *affordances* as well as associated practices and routines, which when integrated into the news production infrastructure, shape and are shaped by the GNA culture of practice. Analysing how Twitter and Facebook are integrated into the existing organisational infrastructure can illuminate processes of change. Thus by analysing how the architecture and affordances of SNS technologies are shaping GNA socio-technical infrastructure and by assessing how the GNA culture of practice and infrastructure is pushing back and shaping SNS use, this theoretical framework enables the researcher to focus in on the intersection of GNA newswork and social media and explicate the complex factors influencing news production. The figure in Appendix 2 illustrates the core elements of this framework and may be useful in visualising the relationship between them.

As social media are increasingly becoming integrated into news organisations' infrastructures of news production, analysis of where and how they intersect becomes crucial. Taking social media architecture and affordances seriously through empirical analysis of how they are navigated and understood by newsworkers in practice can shed light on contemporary news production and emerging practice. Interrogating this through the lens of cultures of practice can help explicate the complex and mutually constitutive relationship between technology and cultural context. By applying this analytical framework to the case of global news agencies, emerging social media practice can be explained and suggestions can be made about changing approaches to news production in relation to shared and contested cultural norms and values. The following chapter outlines the methods and methodology adopted to effectively conduct this research.

Chapter 4. Methodology

Researching Social Media @ Global News Agencies

4.1 Summary

This chapter explains the methodological approach taken in this thesis – that of a *qualitative multiple case study*. It opens with an introduction to the research which reiterates the research questions, aims and objectives followed by an explanation of the conceptual and methodological design of the research, including discussion of the approach taken to the relationship between theory and practice. The subsequent section describes the methodological strategy in the context of the ontological and epistemological influences which underpin the qualitative and constructivist approach adopted. This is followed by an explication of the multiple case study research design and a discussion of the choice and application of methods, including chosen data collection and analysis techniques. The chapter closes with a discussion of research ethics, making particular reference to literature on organisational and Internet research, and a consideration of limitations and challenges that arose during the course of investigation.

4.2 Introduction

As outlined in preceding chapters, this thesis researches the use and understanding of social media in news production at three global news agencies: Reuters, AP and AFP. The research uses the theoretical framework of cultures of practice to analyse and interpret the data. The research has a dual focus on a) organisational understanding and use of social media and b) newsworkers' understandings of social media and their social media practices and routines. It analyses social media at an organisational level and at the level of the individual newsworker, drawing from qualitative empirical data from each of the three GNAs. This data is derived from a) interview and observation alongside b) analysis of social media guidelines and c) analysis of organisational social network site activity. For each set of data, a process of within-case analysis, between case analysis, and cross-case analysis was conducted in order to construct a rich and multi-faceted

picture of social media at GNAs. Analysis was initially conducted on each agency independently in order to identify agency-specific practices and perspectives. Comparative analysis was then conducted between cases in order to shed light on the commonalities and differences between GNAs (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7 for findings). This enabled broader cross-case analysis and discussion of GNA trends in social media use and the relationship between the GNA culture of practice, socio-material contexts of news production and social media technology (see Chapter 8). Emphasis in the conclusions is placed on similarities across settings in order to successfully address the wider issue of social media within the GNA journalistic context rather than within each specific organisation.

A constructivist approach was adopted, which recognises the socially constructed nature of reality and emphasises interrogating actors' understandings of the world - in this case, newsworkers' understandings of the technologies they use and their role in professional practice and culture. This approach acknowledges the mutual shaping of technology and society and foregrounds newsworkers' accounts of their journalistic practices and the technologies they use but also recognises the researcher's own role in analysing and interpreting those accounts.

4.2.1 Research Questions, Aims and Objectives

As stated in the Introduction (1.1), this thesis hypothesises that the use of social media may be transforming GNA news production and culture and set out to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

What is the role of social media in news production in global news agencies and how are these technologies understood by newsworkers?

1. What characterises social media practice in news production?
    1a) How do GNA newsworkers use and understand social media?
    1b) How do GNAs as organisations use social media?
2. How do GNAs shape newsworkers' use and understandings of social media?
3. What are the implications of GNA social media practice for GNA journalism?

Research Aims:

The aims of the research were to a) elucidate social media practice in news production at global news agencies on an organisational and individual level, b) identify and explicate the framing of social media by GNAs, c) explore the understandings and perceptions of social media by newsworkers, d) analyse the relationship between GNA professional culture of practice and newsworkers' use and perceptions of social media.

Research Objectives:

The following research objectives were devised to direct the study:

- Scope the field of news agency studies and social media studies, presenting a critical analysis of pertinent work to-date and positioning this research study.
- Develop a theoretical framework for the analysis of social media in news production that accounts for technology and culture in journalism.
- Investigate organisational use of social media by conducting an analysis of GNA social network site activity on Twitter and Facebook.
- Interrogate how GNAs frame social media by conducting qualitative framing analysis on organisational social media guidelines.
- Explore, record and explain newsworkers' use of social media in the GNA news production process by observing and interviewing them.
- Analyse newsworkers' described interaction with social media, identifying systematic patterns of use (production practices and routines) and irregular use.
- Interrogate and explain newsworkers' understandings of social media and perceptions of their impact on working practices and content.
- Analyse the relationship between newsworkers' uses and understandings of social media, organisational framing of social media, and news production practice using the theoretical framework of cultures of practice for analysis.
- Discuss the implications of the findings for GNA journalism and its future directions.

4.2.2 A Note on Structure

This chapter employs Bryman and Bell's (2007) categorisation of methods-related terminology to structure the discussion of methodology, distinguishing between a) research strategy, b) research design, and c) research methods. Whilst recognising that they are interdependent elements, Bryman and Bell describe research strategy as 'a general orientation to the conduct of research', research design as 'a framework for the collection and analysis of data', and research methods as techniques for collecting data (ibid: 40). In addition, the structure of this chapter was designed to reflect a holistic view of the factors influencing research by taking into account not only the planned influences and intended implications of methodological choices, but also those that were imposed, unplanned or unintended. Buchanan and Bryman assert that research competence involves "addressing coherently the organizational, historical, political, ethical, evidential, and personal factors relevant to an investigation" (2009: 1) alongside the more commonly cited factors such as research aims and epistemological concerns. From this perspective, a research methodology should explain the choice of research strategy, design and method(s) with reference to these diverse influences in order to contextualise methods in the "wider, iterative, and coherent research system" (ibid: 2). This chapter thus strives to detail the array of factors shaping methodological choice and application with the aim of elucidating the often overlooked practicalities of the research process.

4.3 Research Strategy: Conceptual and Methodological Development

This research reflects a particular approach to the relationship between theory and practice: the research process was guided by the belief that theory and method are not discrete elements of research practice, rather, that they are mutually informative elements that form part of an iterative cycle of research development. Buchanan and Bryman explain the complex interdependent nature of this, stating:

> Choice of method is conditioned by (sometimes tacit) theory, method itself
> is (often implicit) theory, and the development of theory can be
> conditioned by the choice of method, which in turn influences the nature
> and scope of the data gathered. (2009: xxvi)

In this way, the research is not driven explicitly by the aim of directly developing theory nor of explicitly applying theory, instead viewing it as a more integrated and implicit factor. The research thus constructs and applies a tentative theoretical framework for analysis with the aim of considering its potential merits and at most generating general claims (not universal theories) and posing new questions. This research is based on the premise that by gathering data from multiple case study sites using multiple methods (interviews, document analysis, observation etc.), at different levels of analysis (individual, organisational, cultural/professional), the "complex, iterative, politicised nature of the change process and the multiple interacting forces determining its outcomes" will be exposed (Buchanan and Bryman 2009: xxvi). This approach is common for research into change in organisational practice that adopts a processual-contextual perspective (Yin 2003). The kind of evidence this case study approach deploys is that of 'specific to general' and 'general in the specific'. The influence of this integrated approach to theory on the development of the research is explained further in a chronological account in Appendix 3.

4.3.1 Questions of Epistemology and Ontology

A discussion of the general orientation to the conduct of any research project must include an interrogation of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that have informed it. Ontology is the set of presuppositions made about the world and the way it works. Ontological assumptions are unavoidable: we can't study 'the world' without presuppositions about the phenomena that we are studying. It is therefore of particular importance for research that these ontological assumptions are made explicit as they have fundamental relevance for how we acquire knowledge and what we consider knowledge to be, i.e. epistemology. Questions of epistemology are philosophical in nature and relate to "the appropriate foundation for the study of society and its manifestations" (Bryman 1984: 75). It is not necessary for this thesis to extensively debate philosophical questions relating to the nature of reality and knowledge, however the fundamental assumptions from which methodological decisions were taken must be further elaborated. The following section discusses these issues in relation to the particular orientation of this project.

As the topic of this thesis falls within the broad categories of communication, media, and journalism research, a good place to start this discussion is with the nature of social research, which can be described as research conducted by social scientists in order to investigate and better understand social phenomena. The strategies used to conduct social research can, whilst recognising the significant limitations of such a basic classification, be divided into two broad categories: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is typically seen to apply a natural science or positivist approach to social phenomena, conducting systematic empirical investigation via statistical, mathematical or computational methods. In referring to it as 'positivist', an essentially epistemological point is being made: that quantitative research is underpinned by the theory that sensory experiences and their logical and mathematical treatment together produce what can be deemed legitimate knowledge. In this way it is most often aligned with an objective view of reality which proposes that there is an external reality, independent of social reality, which can be known. This is in contrast to qualitative research, which is committed to seeing the world from the point of view of the actor and takes the actor's perspective as the empirical point of departure. On an epistemological level, qualitative research emphasises meaning and understanding of social phenomena and values contextual and subjective accuracy over generality, positing that social reality is constituted by social actors through their understandings and engagement. Most qualitative positions are based on the ontological assumption that there is not an external reality that can be objectively known as it is only through social interpretation that we conceive of reality.

This said, in asserting the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research as two different methodological paradigms based in differing philosophical foundations, there is a tendency to overemphasise their incompatibility. All forms of social research use forms of quantification (nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio) and qualitative definition (David and Sutton 2011: 94-95). Furthermore, various models of integration of methods exist (e.g. the phase-model, methodological triangulation) and provide different outcomes (e.g. convergence, complementarity, divergence) (Kelle and Erzeberger 2004: 173-176). Thus although this research is described here as qualitative and looks to explain news work and use of technology from the perspective of the actors engaged in these activities, there are small amounts of quantitative work in the data analysis, manifest for instance in coding and counting.

4.3.2 Qualitative Research

This research adopts a qualitative approach as it was judged to be the most appropriate strategy for gathering, interpreting, analysing and understanding data about the relationship between newsworkers, news production and technologies. As this thesis is concerned with detailed description, interpretation and explanation of the use of social media in news production, rather than a numerical estimation of its prevalence, qualitative methods were employed. The technologies studied – i.e. social media – are relatively recent developments for journalism and are themselves dynamic and rapidly changing therefore they have not been extensively researched in a journalism context. News production in global news agencies has also been inadequately explored and much of the research that does exist is vastly outdated. Qualitative research was therefore considered to be most adapted to generating empirical and theoretical insights into both areas and their relationship with each other in a context that has not previously been widely investigated. The open-ended, inductive features of the qualitative research strategy made it an appropriate choice for such a discovery-oriented study. This approach influenced empirical data collection, which was in the first instance loosely structured and context-dependent - allowing room for the researcher's discretion regarding when each method was used, which questions were asked and what was observed. In this way, as initial observation and exploratory interviews highlighted social media guidelines and organisational accounts as important areas, subsequent methods of data collection (analysis of social media guidelines and organisational activity on social networks) were devised and conducted.

4.3.3 Social Constructivism

The qualitative research strategy described above could be approached in a variety of ways, which are each based on fundamental axioms or sets of assumptions that have profound consequences for the research project and method. The following quote from Bourdieu (1991) accurately illustrates the researcher's reasoning for focusing on the social processes involved in cultures and practices in news production:

The social sciences deal with prenamed, preclassified realities, which bear proper nouns and common nouns, titles, signs, and acronyms. At the risk of unwittingly assuming responsibility for the acts of constitution of whose logic and necessity they are unaware, the social sciences must take as their object of study *the social operations of naming and the rites of institution through which they are accomplished.* (Emphasis added. Ibid: 106)

Bourdieu highlights here the relationship between structure and agency, noting that social phenomena, including the act of conducting social research, take place within pre-existing social structures and pre-existing realities and the role of the researcher is to investigate the processes by which these realities are constituted and maintained. Several social science research traditions look at the constitution of 'reality' or 'realities' through the lens of the constituting activity, thus redirecting the focus of study away from the relation of the constituted subject and constituted world. One of the most prominent traditions in recent research is social constructivism (sometimes referred to as social constructionism, although there is debate over exactly what each term means and whether they are in fact synonymous)[18]. There are numerous iterations of social constructivism. A strong form of social constructivist ontology "presupposes that social reality is constituted through language or discourse as the ontological axiom that frames the study of that reality" (Reed 2009: 434). This form of social constructivism therefore assumes that there are only ever social realities, "created by social actors with no distinctive or 'objective' ontological status or meaning independent of the sociolinguistic practices through which it is inter-subjectively made possible" (ibid). This may be based on the standpoint that the world is 'ontologically unreal' or on the basis that the notions of 'real' and 'unreal' are themselves social constructs, meaning that the question of whether anything is real is itself a social construct, which only serves to illustrate that everything refers back to a socially constructed and mediated world. A weaker form of social construction does not claim that there is no reality, but rather points out that our languages and social practices largely determine how we make sense of that reality. Both perspectives share an epistemological stance that claims we can only 'know' the world in this way.

The approach assumed in this thesis is the application of a social constructivist perspective built on the work of Berger and Luckmann (1966), Jacoby and Ochs (1995:

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[18] The traditions of interpretivism and critical realism also fit into this category.

171), and more recently Fortunati et al., (2009)[19] to the investigation of social phenomena. This research has drawn from the social constructivist perspective an epistemological approach in which the research focus is on the socially constructed mutual knowledge and understandings through which 'social reality' is meaningfully defined and communicated. This affords an approach to knowledge creation in which a preinterpreted and constituted 'social reality' is subjected to redescription and reinterpretation by the researcher through reconstructing and deconstructing the actors' 'subjective worlds' (Reed 2009). This perspective allows for some notion of an 'objective world' but begins from the premise that any external reality outside the social cannot be objectively known because reality is continually being 'socially constituted' by the accomplishments of 'social actors' and interpreted by those social actors.

In this way, this research does not claim to be identifying objective 'truths' or facts about global news agencies' journalistic practice regarding social media technologies. From the constructivist perspective, the main process by which journalistic practice can be understood is through practice and discourse – how the organisations and newsworkers perceive, talk, think about and use these technologies, and how the researcher perceives this activity. This thesis therefore 'redescribes' newsworkers' social reality in a way that is meaningful to the research community and can provide insight into the relationship between this constructed reality as it appears in discourse and as it appears in practice.

4.4 Research Design: Qualitative Case Study

The research framework consists of a qualitative case study approach at multiple sites. This approach enables exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources and ensures it is explored through a variety of lenses so that multiple facets can be revealed and understood (Baxter and Jack 2008). It builds from *three organisational cases* (AP, AFP, Reuters), each with *three data components,* which are each subject to 'within-case', 'between-case' and 'cross-case' analysis (ibid: 550).

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[19] Fortunati et al. (2009: 929) conducted a study of 'the social coconstruction of journalism', claiming that: "In order to interpret the changes occurring in the profession of journalism, we need to consider how this profession is socially constructed, and how these socially shared meanings emerge from the relationships between journalists and their social context. Far from being static, these meanings and relationships are continuously reshaped and negotiated by social actors, with different levels of power."

The situated nature of this design is central to producing insights into individual practice, organisational processes that are particular to each GNA, whilst also constructing an analytic frame that is designed to aid a deeper understanding of the shared GNA culture of practice.

4.4.1 Multiple Case Study

Case studies in the research of organisations consists of detailed investigation of one or more organisations or units within organisations, with the aim of providing analysis of the context and processes involved in a phenomenon. Hartley highlights that the phenomenon under study "is not isolated from its context (as in, say laboratory research) but is of interest precisely because it is in relation to its context" (2004: 209). The use of social media is of particular interest in the case of global news agencies precisely because of the journalistic importance of new technologies and their related work practices in this specific context. It is suggested here that the context-dependent knowledge that case study research produces is best suited to furthering understanding of the environments in which news is created. Flyvbjerg (2006) asserts in his robust defence of case study research as an undervalued and valid method, that this context-dependent knowledge is "at the very heart of expert activity," which is itself central to the exercise of a profession such as journalism.

Flyvjberg (2006) works from the understanding that case knowledge is central to human learning and posits that:

> (T)he closeness of the case study to real-life situations and its multiple wealth of details are important... for the development of a nuanced view of reality, including the view that human behavior cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rulegoverned acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process and in much theory. (Ibid: 223)

Flyvjberg asserts that predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs (i.e. the social sciences) and concludes accordingly that "Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals" (ibid: 224). Approaching case study research from a

constructivist paradigm as this thesis does, enables participants to describe their views of reality, aiding the researcher to better understand their actions (Stake 1995, Yin 2003). The social constructivist perspective taken here is concerned with detailed description, interpretation and explanation of the use of social media in news production, rather than a numerical estimation of its prevalence. It is interested in understanding subjective experience and considering the complexities of context. An important benefit of case-study design is its flexibility and the potential to combine an array of data collection methods, which can each produce data that is useful in its own right and which can be aggregated to provide a range of different angles on a complex context. This is a crucial characteristic of case-study design which corresponds with the logic of constructivism according to which social reality is seen to be constructed through myriad interconnected processes.

In relation to impact on the practitioner, research, and learning environment, Flyvjberg suggests that the case study approach, with its closeness to the research object, can be instrumental in improving the feedback loop in social inquiry, counterbalancing the tendency for some research to end up in "ritual academic blind alleys, where the effect and usefulness of research becomes unclear and untested" (2006: 223). This in turn revitalises the learning process and ensures it remains relevant. Applied to the study of dynamic research sites such as journalistic organisations and to dynamic objects of study such as new technologies, this argument becomes all the more fitting as real-life situations change whilst the related research field and related teaching practice struggle to remain relevant.

A multiple (or collective) case study approach was needed to examine the three GNAs and understand the similarities and differences between them. An advantage is that the evidence created from this type of study is considered robust and reliable – so long as design and implementation are rigorous. Multiple cases typically lead to more robust outcomes than single-case research, especially in the context of inductive theory building (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). However it can generate a large amount of data and create logistical difficulties, often making it extremely time consuming and expensive to conduct (Baxter and Jack 2008). The research questions, aims and objectives served to focus data collection, direct the study and define its scope. Alongside the theoretical framework, this formed the basis for the conceptual structure of the case studies.

Other approaches can also be suitable for interrogating how and why particular phenomena occur in specific contexts. Most notably, ethnography has traditionally been used to provide in-depth, rich description and complex analysis of research contexts, often

characterised by its use of participant observation to collect data. In a similar manner to case studies, ethnography also uses a combination of methods, including observation, interview and document analysis. It is important to explain the several very important differences between this approach and a case study approach, which were instrumental in deciding on use of the latter for this project. The first difference relates to the researcher's role: ethnographic researchers strive to immerse themselves in the research setting in order to be somewhat accepted as part of the context whereas case study researchers seek to remain apart from the setting. The second divergence relates to planning. Ethnographic research is highly flexible and develops in a 'natural' way, meaning that it responds to unplanned events and activities as they occur in the research environment - for this, interviews are un-planned or loosely planned, are open-ended and free-flowing or conversational and can be spontaneous. This approach would have required a far more extensive level of access than the agencies were willing to allow and so was not appropriate. In contrast, case study was more appropriate as it is significantly more planned and organised, with a pre-arranged protocol and structured or semi-structured (or at the least, guided) interviews. It was clear from previous news agency researchers' accounts that the access needed and freedom granted for ethnography would be virtually impossible and this was confirmed in initial negotiations with gatekeepers at GNAs who were more open to a planned approach. The research of GNAs posed particular challenges to the research process as they are: relatively closed businesses; operate in a highly competitive market; are home to a busy work environment; are characterised by tight deadlines and unpredictable work patterns. The case study approach minimised potential disruption of the work process in the eyes of the organisations' gatekeepers and provided them with a transparent structure of the research process, which they could plan to accommodate. A strong argument in favour of the case study is that it can deal with this dynamism and the challenges it poses and still offer scope and depth. Case study design enabled combination of a targeted selection of diverse data collection methods (see 4.5.1-4.5.3), which responded effectively to the research questions, making it the most appropriate choice for this research. The intention of this research was to delineate the nature of social media in GNA journalism through detailed investigation of the three cases and their contexts for which case study was most suitable. The focus of an ethnographic approach to uncover the tacit knowledge of participants of a culture from an emic perspective could not address the research aims and objectives.

Within case study research there is potential for a high level of flexibility regarding the execution of data collection - whilst some researchers prefer a rigid

structure, others allow for a more open and exploratory approach. This project conducted observation and interview in a manner more akin to an open-ended, exploratory design, which incorporated a similar amount of planning but afforded a less pre-defined view of the research topic and focus. This allowed for an iterative and responsive process of research development that led to the incorporation of the analysis of social network sites and social media guidelines as complimentary methods. Engaging multiple sources of evidence contributed to construct validity by providing multiple measures of the same phenomenon whilst conducting the research so that the chain of evidence was maintained should allow readers to trace the evidentiary process from conclusions back to the research questions or vice-versa (Yin 2009, Baškarada 2014).

4.4.2 Comparative Analysis

A multiple case study design consists of the detailed investigation of more than one comparable unit of analysis with a view to analysing the cases in relation to each other. In organisational studies, this can involve two or more organisations, or two or more units within an organisation. Comparative case studies are common in journalism research, with many scholars adopting an 'ethnographic case study' design, though this can range in length from days (Domingo 2008 – 5 stages of 3 days;) to months (Boyd-Barrett 1980) and years (Paterson 2011a). Another growing area focuses on cross-cultural comparisons, most often of media systems and organisations in different countries[20] (Trappel et al. 2011), but also of different professional and organisational cultures within single- and multiple-country contexts[21]. This study represents comparison across the leading organisations of one sector of the journalistic profession i.e. global news agency journalism. It is argued that a comparative analysis of these cases – an approach which acknowledges the role of similarities and differences in the histories, traditions and cultures that contribute to forming production contexts - is a vital tool with which to construct a comprehensive picture of GNA news production.

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[20] See Hanitzsch 2009 for an extensive discussion of cross-national journalism research.
[21] This study technically contains a cross-national element as the news agencies, though considered global in their service provision and international newsgathering reach, began operation in national contexts, which continue to have significant influence on them (Boyd-Barrett 1980). This however is not an explicit focus of the research.

For comparative journalism research, equivalence - ensuring that concepts, including roles, are equivalent across contexts - is an essential consideration. Hanitzsch (2009: 423) advocates a rigorous approach to ensuring that concepts as well as research methods and administrative procedures are equivalent. The GNAs in this study can be seen to be equivalent in many ways and to have many norms, values, and practices in common but they are also quite different (see Chapter 2) therefore equivalence remains an important consideration. One way of thinking about what this comparative design can be useful for is to shed light on the extent to which, and ways in which work practices are attributable to either common factors or their context. For example, similarities in social media practice may be influenced by common external or independent factors such as the technology's architecture but mediated by local contexts. Deconstructing this scenario and the processes and relationships that characterise it may lead to a better understanding of each case and of the wider news agency environment.

Organisational research shows that the properties of the organisation being studied are important for the logistics of fieldwork and choice of method. Global news agencies are large, multi-sited, professional bureaucracies of which there are only three in the world, which meant that the sampling frame on an organisational level was very limited. In order to maximise the chances of access and to ensure a comparative design could be achieved, gatekeepers at all three possible participant organisations were contacted. They agreed to participate, acting as mediator between the researcher and potential participants. Within this case study design of three journalistic organisations of the same kind (i.e. GNAs) a rationale for sample frames within the organisation was constructed to collect three sets of comparable data from each. These data sets reflect a layered approach to analysis which has three levels: firstly the professional, i.e. global news agencies, secondly the organisational, i.e. AP, AFP and Reuters; and thirdly the individual, i.e. newsworker. This three-tiered logic thus structures both data collection and analysis and is designed to provide insights into the interrelationships between each element. Comparative analysis of each agency's organisational activity on SNSs (Chapter 5), social media guidelines (Chapter 6) and newsworkers' perspectives and reported practices (Chapter 7) are the methods used to shed light on each element. Empirical data was thus collected using multiple methods in each agency in order to explore the specific characteristics of each organisation and this was then aggregated and analysed alongside additional secondary data to allow for comparison across the profession. A perspective over time was sought in the research in order to help detect more easily if practices and

routines were evolving and to negate any chance that practices were in use only during a specific time. In this way, the research data was gathered over a three-year period.

GNAs are not always open to having researchers investigate their work or be present in the newsroom interviewing newsworkers. There are several reasons for this, most prominent of which are the time it takes out of the working day and the risk of exposing practices and attitudes that the organisation may not wish to be made public or revealing commercially sensitive material. News agencies are also highly competitive and do not relish providing information about their practices and strategies that may in any way compromise their industry position or brand. This makes it difficult to gain access to their newsworkers and newsrooms and it means that even when access is granted, it can be difficult to obtain certain types of information. This practical consideration means that relying only on interview and observation in the newsroom is not always appropriate in the GNA context. Moreover, there is a strong case for moving news production studies away from the newsroom, which has dominated journalism studies at the expense of other notional 'sites' or physical locations (Zelizer 2004, Wahl-Jorgensen 2009. See Appendix 4 for further discussion of this point). The following composition of methods was chosen in order to ensure collection of an appropriate amount and suitable variety of data of comparable form from across the three GNAs that respond directly to the research questions and aims.

4.5 Research Methods: Multiple Methods and Triangulation

In order to be sure the case study is rigorous the data collected must directly address the research questions, aims, and objectives, the methods of collection and analysis must be appropriate, as must the criteria for interpreting findings (Yin 2003). Flick et al. state that reality "becomes meaningful subjectively and that it is transmitted and becomes effective by collective and individual instances of interpretation" (Flick et al. 2004: 5). The reflexive and recursive nature of constructed social reality is foregrounded in this study and the everyday processes of construction form the research focus. This means that action, interaction and communication are the objects of data collection procedures: this includes interaction between people and between people and artefacts, e.g. technologies. No single research method could adequately address the varied nature of this project's research questions, which sought data on practice, process,

interaction and perception. In response to this, a multi-method approach was adopted which combined: semi-structured and open-ended face-to-face interviews; structured and open-ended email interviews; document analysis; a small amount of observation; and analysis of social network activity.

The use of more than one method of data collection and source of data provides the opportunity to triangulate data (Yin 2009). Triangulation is the use of a combination of methods or sources of data collection, which when constructed in a complementary manner can provide a more full and complex picture of the object of study. In this way, consistencies can be recognised and interpreted and discrepancies can be investigated further "in pursuit of deeper, more valid, interpretations" (Cottle 2007: 6). The approach used here ensures both complementarity and validation of results. Complementarity in triangulation implies "an enlargement of perspectives that permit a fuller treatment, description and explanation of the subject area", whilst validation refers to "a cumulative validation of research results" (Kelle and Erzberger 2004: 174).

Concerning measures of quality in qualitative research, Fitzgerald and Dopson point out that indicators of 'rigour' have no "analogous set of acknowledged and established standards" and propose a general quality framework which includes effective construct validity based on criteria of internal and external validity and reliability (2009: 470). These are complex and contested concepts but triangulation is identified as a useful way of confirming the validity of the processes of researching. *Methodological triangulation* is employed in this research whereby one approach is followed by another in order to increase confidence in the interpretation (Denzin 1984). Past research has identified the possibility of interviews producing reports of attitudes that differ significantly from observations of behaviour related to those attitudes and conversely of observational reports recording behaviour that cannot be fully explained or understood without reference to information provided via interview. Effort is made in this research to avoid committing what Jerolmack and Khan call "the attitudinal fallacy—the error of inferring situated behavior from verbal accounts" (2014: 179). This is achieved by trying to validate any claims that newsworkers' accounts of practice and attitudes are associated with their actual use of social media (Pager and Quillian 2005) with reference to pertinent academic literature and data generated through complementary methods, and by reporting findings in a way that does not conflate reported sentiments and acts with actual practice, instead seeking to draw out the relationship between them. To do this, the researcher must ensure interview quotes are assessed and presented critically and analytically, referring back to relevant literature to aid explanation.

A combination of methods may lead to a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the research topic, with the weaknesses of each method being countered in some way by another. A more holistic and rich account may be derived from combining methods in a strategic manner in order to shed light on the relationship between what GNAs and their newsworkers say and what they do. In this way: observation was a useful complementary method to interviewing in that it could validate or contradict newsworkers' claims; interview data could provide insight into the motivations and thought processes behind observed use of social media and analysis of SNS activity; analysis of SNS activity could illuminate trends and patterns in GNA social media use that would not be identifiable through interviewing and analysis of guidelines; whilst guideline analysis can help explain organisational understandings and approaches to social media that help put GNA SNS activity and individual newsworkers' described practices into context. Moreover, document analysis provided a concomitant method capable of producing historical data and official accounts that would not be accessible in other ways and that situates the other data. These can be seen as 'protocols' to ensure accuracy and alternative explanations (Stake 1995; 2005).

External validity deals with the issue of knowing whether findings are 'generalisable' to other cases. While the aim in this thesis is to illuminate use, understandings and impacts of social media on GNA journalism the focus is not heavily on generalising out beyond the cases. However by testing the cultures of practices theoretical framework for usefulness for interrogating and explaining these issues, the research does aim to develop insights into the relationship between professional cultures of practice and new technologies. For this purpose, case studies that use both within and cross-case analysis have been found to be more effective at generating theoretical insights and propositions than those employing only one (Barratt et al., 2011).

4.5.1 Document Analysis

An essential constituent of this research is data on the GNA context and analysis of their social media policies, strategies and practices. Different forms of document analysis were necessary to provide this information. There were almost no academic sources of information about social media at GNAs and very little about their production process in the digital era. Most contextual background information was therefore gathered

from rather dated academic work, supplemented by contemporary news and trade publications and publicly available organisational documentation (which were also sporadic and fairly limited). This is partly due to the reluctance of these competitive organisations to publicly publish information that may give away closely-held information or compromise their market position. This data was however necessary and useful for building an understanding of GNAs. Using documentation as a source of information has several benefits: it is stable and can be reviewed repeatedly throughout the research process without time constraints; it is unobtrusive and involves relatively few barriers to collection, existing as it does prior to the execution of the research; furthermore it can provide detailed and exact data, providing names, dates etc., and can be extensive, covering broad periods of time. However some of the required documentation was also difficult to find and retrieve. It also inevitably reflects the author bias, which must be taken into consideration when determining the nature of the information it provides. A broad outline of social media at GNAs was constructed by aggregating information from internal documents including handbooks and guidelines, as well as material hosted on their public-facing websites, including corporate communication newsletters, press releases, and blogs alongside several news/trade publications' reports of interviews with GNA management or social media specialists.

The primary written evidence of GNAs' strategic response to the growing importance of social media for journalism is the specific entries into their Handbooks or guidelines. This research began at a crucial moment, just as GNAs were creating their first versions of these guidelines (AP in 2009, Reuters in 2010 and AFP in 2011) and continued as they expanded and became more important to news production. As such, the principal form of document analysis was conducted through a framing analysis of each agency's social media guidelines (see Chapter 6). This analysis aimed to identify how GNAs (as organisations) constructed official discourses about social media technology. In news production contexts, formalised knowledge systems operate alongside and in relation to what Robert Park (1940) described as 'synthetic knowledge' - the tacit knowledge that is embodied in habit and custom. Journalistic handbooks/guidebooks, "how-to" manuals and guidelines can be used to identify cues to how newsworkers, including journalists and managers, think (Zelizer 2004: 28-30). They represent a uniquely formalised, enduring and material element of the organisational community's internal reference system, which combines elements of both formalised and tacit

knowledge. Alongside documents regarding media law and ethics[22], these guidelines represent a centralised and unifying formal code of conduct for all contracted GNA employees. As such, they were a key focus for analysis and were used to interpret and inform analysis of the social network site activity (Chapter 5) and interview content (Chapter 7). The interviews and observation were then used in conjunction with this as a method to identify the tacit knowledge shared by newsworkers that could only emerge upon elicitation.

4.5.2 Qualitative Framing Analysis of Social Media Guidelines

Chapter 6 reports the findings of a comparative qualitative framing analysis of GNA social media guidelines. Framing theory is an analytical lens which enables researchers to interrogate how issues are packaged in communicative texts through the use, placement, recurrence and contextualisation of key words, concepts, images and symbols, which emphasise and foreground certain aspects of an issue, whilst de-prioritising or discounting other aspects. It has most commonly been used to analyse how journalists make some aspects of their content more prominent and to identify the characteristics of how news is constructed and infer meaning from this. It has been widely applied in political communication studies to assess how media frames are used to influence public opinion in a manner deemed desirable by the communicator(s). In communication research, the concept of framing has been applied to the analysis of news from production, content, and media effects perspectives - although there has been inconsistency in conceptual clarity and operational definitions of framing and frames (de Vreese 2012) as well as in the application of framing as an approach to analysis.

The framing process is often broken down into frame-building and frame-setting as well as the "individual and societal level consequences of framing (de Vreese 2005: 52; for a review of frame analysis, see Benford and Snow 2000; D'Angelo 2002; or Scheufele 1999). Frame-building is the process by which frames are produced in a text and refers to the factors that influence the structural qualities of frames. Frame-setting refers to the interaction between frames and individuals' (and groups') prior knowledge and predispositions (de Vreese 2005) – the process by which frames may shape learning,

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[22] Many of which are national in scope and therefore differ according to location of news production and distribution.

interpretation and evaluation of issues, events and artefacts. The analysis in Chapter 6 is concerned with the former and is referred to from this point simply as framing (rather than frame-building). Holistic accounts of framing look at the process from content production to content reception and effects, arguing that consumers of texts employ their own individual frames to make sense of messages. This research does not claim to explicitly investigate the negotiation of these frames by newsworkers, rather it seeks to explain how frames have been constructed in the text. However Chapter 7 discusses newsworkers engagement and perceptions of the guidelines as part of an analysis of their understandings and uses of social media.

Framing, at its most fundamental level, is a process that "involves a communication source presenting and defining an issue" (de Vreese 2005: 51) and "an emphasis in salience of certain aspects of a topic" (de Vreese, 2002: 4). Entman's definition suggests that to frame is to "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating context," (1993: 52). The concept of framing can also be applied to non-media texts and has been used to analyse press releases and political advertisements (Hanggli and Kriesi 2012) and political speech (Kuypers 2009). This thesis seeks to advance the current literature by applying framing analysis to internal communication created by global news agencies (organisations) for newsworkers (employees/individuals) through analysis of the social media guidelines that are created to inform and organise the understanding and use of social media technology in the news production setting.

GNAs pay particular attention to the development and packaging of guidelines (Reuters 2013a: 1), which act as a tool for setting the agenda (by telling newsworkers what to think about) and framing issues within the agency (by telling them the 'organisationally acceptable' ways to think about issues). Communication scholars use the term packaging to describe "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation (Entman 2007: 11). The framing of policy-related and instructive information works towards shaping and organising the behaviour and practices of newsworkers (the intended audience) in directions deemed desirable by the GNA. This shaping process does not 'determine' practice but contributes to constructing shared understandings and knowledge bases, building consensus and standardising news production routines alongside other shaping factors. This process generates a visible and archived text to which newsworkers can refer but also a crucial space to negotiate meanings, encouraging newsworkers to understand not only favoured practices and

processes of news production but also which interpretations and discourses are considered valid and important by the agency. Entman asserts that frames "*define problems*—determine what a causal agent is doing with what costs and benefits, usually measured in terms of common cultural values; *diagnose causes*—identify the forces creating the problem; *make moral judgments*—evaluate causal agents and their effects; and *suggest remedies*—offer and justify treatments for the problems and predict their likely effects" (1993: 52. Emphasis in original). Organisational framing of guidelines forms one part of the socialisation process in news organisations, promoting interpretations of newswork which fit the preferred ideals, norms, values, behaviours, practices and routines of the organisation (i.e. the culture of practice). It is a particularly important process for dealing with innovation and new technologies and thus in this context, can reveal important information about the GNA approach to social media.

When conducting framing analysis, the definition of what constitutes a frame is important in ensuring that they are comparable and that this procedure could be replicated effectively in other settings or by other researchers on the same data. Gamson and Modigliani (1989), suggest the definition - that a frame is a "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue" (ibid: 143). Todd Gitlin proposed that: "Frames are principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (1980: 6). Gitlin adds that media frames are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual".

In this study, a frame is considered to be more than a 'pattern' or 'theme' as it provides a specific understanding of the world, or as Entman described it, an interpretation or evaluation of reality (1993). Framing helps to define a problem, can identify causes, make a moral judgement and suggests a remedy (Entman 1993). Furthermore, the approach used here takes into account the nature of the texts under analysis, which contain a combination of policy and instruction/advice. This type of document has a typical format related to its role in organisational management. Thus analysis starts from the general assumption that the guidelines are addressing what is considered to be a problem, that ideas about the causes of or responsibilities for the problem are suggested and that a solution/solutions are proposed (adapted from Verloo 2005). This approach builds from Entman's work but also Verloo's 'Critical Frame Analysis', which he used as a methodology for the comparative analysis of the framing of

gender inequality as a policy problem[23] (ibid). Analysing policy documentation, Verloo developed the concept of 'policy frame', defined as "an organising principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful policy problem, in which a solution is implicitly or explicitly enclosed" (ibid: 20). This particular variant of comparative and policy-based frame analysis, has informed the approach taken here, particularly with regard to a) the use of sensitising questions and b) the technique of analysing dimensions of frames rather than constructing a hierarchical set of pre-defined codes or typologies of frames, which aided comparable description.

Methods of frame identification differ widely across the literature and framing studies offer various levels of detail in their explanation of measurement. Through analysis of keywords and arguments, stock phrases, sources of information and "sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments" (Entman 1993: 52), approaches to framing the social media issue in the guidelines can be identified. The identification of framing mechanisms, including headers, sub headers, images, statistics and charts, introductory and concluding statements, quotes, keywords and stock phrases (revised from Tankard 2001: 101), allow for structured empirical analysis of news frames. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) also identify "framing devices" - metaphors, examplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images - that condense information and offer a "package" of an issue. This approach was used for the first round of analysis (see Appendix 5a for the template of mechanisms). Approaches to framing analysis can be inductive or deductive - the approach used here is inductive and refrains from applying a priori frames (see Gamson 1992, Neuman et al., 1992), which is suited to such a small sample of three documents[24]. Inductive approaches to frame analysis have been criticised for relying a sample that is too small and for being difficult to replicate (Hertog and McLeod 2001), however due to the uncommon application of this form of analysis to organisational, guideline documents and instructive texts (and the lack of previous application in the context of news organisations) the search for emergent frames was more appropriate.

The extrapolation from microelements (the concepts and arguments) to the broader concept of frames is an important step and de Vreese points out the necessity for framing research "to explicate and make transparent how these microelements are aggregated and extrapolated to constitute frames" (2012: 367). This particular analysis

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[23] As does the larger Mageeq research project of which the author was part - see Verloo 2007.

[24] Three documents when the two independent sections of the same document/two independently published but linked documents on the same issue were combined.

was guided by the sensitising questions: What is the problem? What are the causes? What are the solutions? It was conducted in three stages. Firstly each set of guidelines was analysed using a template of framing devices to identify patterns and themes (see Appendix 5a). This allowed for a thorough and systematic reading of the texts independently and comparatively and provided important background data on their format, content, lexical structure, and methods of argumentation. Secondly each set of guidelines was analysed in terms of Entman's assertion that framing helps to define a problem, can identify causes, make a moral judgement and suggest a remedy (Entman 1993). This stage was informed by Verloo's approach to analysing policy documents (2005; 2007) and as a response to the clear 'problem-cause-solution' pattern emerging from the guidelines concerning the formulation of discussion – In this way, the texts were coded and categorised to identify what was presented as 1) a problem, 2) a cause and 3) a solution (see Appendix 5b). The final stage allowed for extrapolation of frames that structured the instances of 'problem-cause-solution' in the text and for the comparative analysis of these frames (see Appendix 6a).

4.5.3 Analysis of Organisational Social Network Site Activity

Chapter 5 reports the findings of an analysis of social network site activity that was largely qualitative but also involved a quantitative element. Researchers are increasingly making use of the huge amounts of freely accessible, archived and searchable data that social media produce in order to gain insights into their role in the journalism ecology (see the extensive output of Bruns (2012) and his collaborators for a good example of this in relation to Twitter). In order to analyse whether and how global news agencies are using social media in an organisational capacity, an analysis of organisational social network activity was necessary. This research method involved identifying the agencies' primary organisational social media accounts[25] on the two

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[25] For AFP, the primary accounts (i.e. those with most followers, which were set up first) were French language accounts, however the researcher chose to analyse AFP's English language accounts for several reasons: the English language is a 'lingua franca' across social media, used at times even by those whose native language is not English (Takhteyeva, Gruzdb and Wellman 2012: 79-81); it dominates on Twitter making up 51% of tweets in 2014 (Seshagiri 2014) and English-speaking journalists lead the way in social media use for journalism, with the UK, US and Canada significantly surpassing use in France (Cision 2013a); it was thought this choice would improve comparability of cultural contexts with the AFP interview data, collected amongst English speaking staff in the UK; it avoided the need for translation of tweets/posts,

leading social network sites - Twitter and Facebook - and conducting analysis of their public activity.

Activity on social networks commonly involves posting or 'sharing' information via a homepage or timeline by uploading data in the form of text (including hyperlinks), images, video and audio. It also involves interacting with other users via these forms or through automatic 'Social Plugins' such as the 'Like' button on Facebook or automatic 'Retweet' and 'Favourite' buttons on Twitter (see Chapter 5 for explanation). Though social media store useful digital traces or 'trace data' (Wesler et al. 2008) of activity, inbuilt limitations can restrict the efficacy of gathering data from them, as boyd and Crawford explain:

> For example, Twitter and Facebook are examples of Big Data sources that offer very poor archiving and search functions. Consequently, researchers are much more likely to focus on something in the present or immediate past – tracking reactions to an election, TV finale, or natural disaster – because of the sheer difficulty or impossibility of accessing older data. (2012: 666)

Numerous applications and services have been developed to aid analysis of social media activity[26] however these were not appropriate for gathering the exact data needed for this study, which necessitated an element of researcher interpretation in order to code the content of posts and the nature of interaction between the organisation and other users. A lack of methodological development in this particular field of research made the analysis a complex process (Canter 2013) and necessitated the development of a case-specific process of analysis, which is explained here.

For the analysis of organisational SNS activity, a sample frame was sought that would provide insight into the use of Twitter and Facebook by GNAs at the time of study (2013) and enable the researcher to explore trends and patterns in the characteristics of their communication via this medium. The sample did therefore not aim to be representative of the entirety of the agencies' SNS activity or provide analysis of changes in activity over time, rather it was to provide a snapshot of their use of SNSs, which was not exhaustive but insightful. Taking the month of July 2013 as a sample frame, activity

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which could risk introducing error and finally; the English accounts were a close second to the French accounts, set up around the same time and with fewer but a still significant following.

[26] For example Twitter Search, Foller.me, Topsy etc.

conducted by AFP, AP and Reuters on their primary English-language Twitter and Facebook accounts was hand-coded in chronological order in a table of emergent codes (see blank coding schedule in Appendix 7)[27]. Each post was broken down into its compositional elements, which were recorded and counted (see Appendix 8 for completed coding tables). The content of posts was also analysed in terms of the mode of address and content to which it linked (if applicable) whilst other activities ('Liking', 'Favouriting') were recorded separately. SNS activity was coded until data saturation was reached and there were no longer any new categories emerging. It became clear that this was occurring after approximately a week for each agency therefore a week-long timeframe was imposed for this first stage of data collection[28]. In this period a total of 1,038 tweets and 78 Facebook posts were hand-coded. From this data, categories were developed to aid discussion and analysis of overarching trends in activity and themes within these categories were identified (see Table 2)[29]. For the second stage, the researcher then analysed the remaining posts for the rest of the month using the aforementioned categories and only recorded their content if it showed variation from the previously identified activity, by using screenshots and research notes[30]. This approach mitigated problems related to the large volume of repetitive data the method of hand-coding the details of every post would have captured. In this month-long period, a total of 4,718 tweets and 100 Facebook posts were coded.

The codes were emergent and created iteratively as an output of the analysis (see Chapter 5) as were the themes and categories. This method enabled the researcher to explicate patterns of activity – i.e. which practices were common (newsgathering/ distribution/discussion etc.,) and which types of content were commonly posted. It also allowed for investigation of the amount and nature of interaction with other users.

There are a few important limitations to this method that must be outlined. Firstly, SNS account administrators can manually delete posts retrospectively, a process which leaves no trace of the erased activity on their timeline. This cannot be avoided when retrospectively gathering data. Additionally, private messages were not accessible to the

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[27] These searches were performed within Twitter using the following search terms: from:AFP since:2013-07-01 until:2013-08-01 include:retweets; from:AP since:2013-07-01 until:2013-08-01 include:retweets; from:Reuters since:2013-07-01 until:2013-08-01 include:retweets.

[28] 25th-31st July 2013 for Twitter and 1st-7th December for Facebook.

[29] Canter's (2013) research into local journalists' use of Twitter was particularly useful in aiding conceptualisation of broad categories (and identifying types of activity that were possible on SNSs but missing from agency use).

[30] For each agency's Twitter samples, the hand-coded week was July 25th-31st 2013, whilst the rest of the month of July was analysed for differences. For each agency's Facebook account, the hand-coded week was December 1st-7th 2013, whilst the rest of the month of December was analysed for differences.

researcher and therefore could not be included in the sample, restricting the researcher's access to public activity only. A further related limitation which applies only to the Facebook data sample must also be noted. The application programming interface (API) used by Facebook removes posts retrospectively and the rationale for which posts are visible and which are not is not provided by the company. Although this does not affect the week-long hand-coded analysis of Facebook activity as this was done in real-time, it has implications for the analysis of the rest of the month, which was conducted at a later date. The impact of this is that the month-long data sets that were compiled from the agencies' Facebook timelines are therefore not representative of the full amount of their activity in that period as some posts may have been removed. This limitation was not known until after the analysis had been completed and has the effect of reducing the size of the sample of posts which risks potentially missing certain types of activity.

Finally, the short time period over which the sample of activity was collected may provide a general indication of the nature of social network use but considering that the agencies have each been active on these sites for around three years, it represents only a small sample of their use and does not show how this may have changed over time. Additionally, there are numerous organisational accounts for each agency (see 5.3 and 5.4 for more detail), therefore analysis of a) their primary English language account and b) their Twitter and Facebook accounts represents only certain elements of organisational use of social media - albeit their leading and most popular accounts - and cannot be generalised to represent all instances of their use. This means the analysis is not representative of the entirety of SNS activity by the agencies, only of this particular portion of organisational social media activity, and this must be acknowledged in any discussion of findings to ensure claims are not overstated, as for example, it could suggest certain practices are more prevalent than they are when considered in relation to all GNA social media practice. However, the adopted method of analysis was not constructed to be representative of the entirety of SNS activity by the agencies but rather to provide insights into practice and give an indication of trends and patterns in their approach to using social media, as guided by the research questions. Conclusions drawn from this data are interpreted in relation to these caveats and are not used to make claims beyond their applicability. As such, incorporating these recognised limitations, the method provides a suitable amount and type of data to generate illuminating insights into the manner in which GNAs use these SNSs.

4.5.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

Chapter 7 reports the findings of interview analysis. The interview was a core method used in this thesis to explore the role of social media at GNAs as they are a flexible method for developing the breadth and depth of data. In-depth interviews are one of the most powerful methods in qualitative research because they allow the researcher to "step into the mind of another person, see and experience the world as they do themselves" (McCracken 1988: 9). In comparative studies, they are often used to probe and explore in detail the particular circumstances of each case whilst also allowing for cross-comparison. In organisational studies, they are particularly useful for focusing on the relationship between professional, organisational, and individual activity, and placing practice and behaviour in their specific context. Interviews were thus apt for gaining insight into the newsworkers' subjective experiences and contextualising those experiences, whilst also providing a basis to consider the interconnecting elements of their experiences. Interviews can provide a route into identifying and investigating "areas of broad cultural consensus and people's more personal, private and special understandings" (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 4). However there are limitations to interviewing as a data collection technique such as the inevitability of the interviewer, the interview setting and interview questions influencing the participants' responses. Through choosing what to ask, where and how to ask it, what language to use etc., the interviewer has a shaping influence and there is the possibility that the interviewee expresses what they believe the interviewer wants to hear. There is also the issue of incomplete recollection when an interviewee is giving an account of their practices.

Interviews can be approached in a variety of ways ranging from highly structured and closed to unstructured, conversational and open-ended. The semi-structured interview approach used in this research allowed for a set of pre-determined lines of enquiry to be systematically addressed whilst also providing the flexibility for new themes and questions to emerge from the interviewees' responses. The open-ended, discursive character of the interviews were designed to engender an iterative process of refinement, in which strands of thought and questioning raised by the interviewees were taken up by the researcher for use either later in the interview or in subsequent interviewing. The emphasis with this type of interviewing was on how the interviewees understood practices, issues, and norms in news production, providing a selection of material that the respondent thinks is important in relation to guided topics. In order to obtain information in the general area determined for study (social media), a limited

number of instigator and prompt questions were necessary. This structure was also adopted to ensure cross-comparability, as the research was conducted at multiple sites.

A minimum of one and maximum of three interviews were conducted with each participant. The opening part of the interview was used to sketch details of participants' professional role, use of technology and relationship with technology, whilst also being a vehicle for introducing the researcher and the research project to the participant. In the first round of exploratory interviews, newsworkers were then asked to describe their daily routines and consider what technological developments within news production over the past 10 years (or however long they had been working there) they consider to be most significant and what transformations (if any) they believe coincided with that technological change. However by the second round of interviews, this section was dropped as it became clear from the issues identified in the literature review, document analysis and initial interviews that social media were the most relevant area for further investigation. Newsworkers were then asked a set of key questions about their use and understanding of social media. Any further interviews probed the topics and issues raised in the previous interview. The interview questions are outlined in detail in Appendix 9.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted on an individual basis either in private offices, at the work station in the newsroom or in a shared space near the newsroom. The choice was given to the respondent as to which place the interview would take place in order to ensure that they were comfortable with their surroundings. There were benefits and disadvantages to both locations. The private room created a safe environment which was conducive for sharing confidential information, including information that newsworkers would not want colleagues or managers to overhear and allowed for a more private rapport between researcher and respondent to develop, however it was also segregated from the normal work environment and was quite a formal setting. The work station was useful for contextualising participants' responses as it allowed them to provide demonstrations and examples during the interview (whether voluntarily or prompted by the researcher), and provided a familiar and comfortable space for the respondent. However it was also a very open environment with no privacy, in which distractions were common and others could overhear the discussion, which may have inhibited the openness of responses.

Email Interviews

In order to obtain responses from newsworkers that were not based in the GNA London newsrooms, it was necessary to find other methods of data collection. Email interviews were well-suited to this study and in particular to the second round of data collection as they were a good way of producing rich written accounts of newsworkers' work experiences with social media, including recollections concerning change. Often, comparisons are made between email interviews and face-to-face interviews in order to highlight the lack of spontaneity and richness (e.g. extra-linguistic data, facial expressions, body language) of email interviews in comparison to face-to-face interview data. These are warranted concerns, however the combination of the two styles of qualitative interviewing ensured that these nuances were not lost and email interviewing was helpful for reaching newsworkers beyond the researcher's geographical reach and significantly reducing the amount of time needed for analysis as written accounts did not need prior transcription. Email interviews rely on participants having access to and feeling confident using computers and email applications as well as feeling comfortable writing their own accounts of their experiences. This was not a problem for the professional newsworkers in this study who use these technologies on a daily basis and who are often required to write accounts of their experiences or deal with others' accounts. A downside of this method is that taking part can take a lot of time for participants and this factor was identified as having a negative impact on the response rate. GNA journalists are particularly busy whilst at work and were being contacted via their work email addresses which are often only accessed during work hours. The participants were however advised that the interview could be completed at any time in order improve the response rate.

Interview Sampling

A combination of sampling methods was used to ensure an adequate response rate. In the initial stages, purposive sampling was used within the sample frame of GNAs with the basic requisite for participant choice being members of staff with professional roles that were instrumental in the production of news. As such, the majority of participants were journalists and editors. Gatekeepers to these participants were also interviewed in order to get a managerial perspective and technicians and policy developers were sought who would have different areas of expert knowledge, however these roles are fewer in

the organisation and this is reflected in the proportion present in the interview cohort. This sampling strategy worked toward an aim of reaching data saturation, selecting participants on the basis of providing a deliberately diverse sample within the aforementioned sample frame covering 1) all three global news agencies, and within those agencies; 2) all of their media specialisms (i.e. video, text, photo, multimedia[31], social media); 3) different position levels (measured according to a newsworker/manager distinction); 4) different job types (measured according to a desk worker/journalist in-the-field distinction but also with the aim to incorporate policymakers and technical staff); and 5) geographical localities (either UK-based - in London using face-to-face interviews or globally using Skype/email interviews, which allowed further reach).

Key gatekeepers within the organisations were identified and interviewed first (i.e. head of bureau and/or department) and asked to allow access to the staff under their management and to recommend an initial set of those newsworkers who would be available on the planned research days. None of the gatekeepers placed explicit restrictions on which staff could be approached and all recommended several newsworkers that would be on shift during the research period. To counter the chance that gatekeepers were guiding the researcher toward a certain type of participant, alongside the initial set of newsworkers negotiated with the gatekeepers, a more diverse array of roles were sought in accordance with the sampling strategy. These newsworkers were approached and participation was negotiated via email or Twitter. This part of data collection required an element of snowball sampling used to identify potentially interesting and willing interviewees and to counter the low response rate from contacting newsworkers without being able to demonstrate any recognisable link to or having a recommendation from their colleagues. After successfully conducting an interview with a participant, they were asked if they would like to suggest a colleague who may be willing to participate.

The dual sampling strategy worked successfully, though the question of whether data saturation was in fact reached is a difficult one. Concerning the nuance and detail of the individual ways interviewees engaged with and conceptualised social media technologies, each participant was unique and therefore there was further scope for investigation. However as coding categories emerged, these nuances could be associated with general themes and a saturation point was reached after [40] interviews regarding the development of new themes. There is also a question of whether a diversity of

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[31] There was a multimedia department in AFP but not Reuters.

perspectives were incorporated. As a result of describing the research as an investigation into the use and understanding of social media in news production, the researcher was consistently guided towards newsworkers who were known to use these technologies and often those who were seen to be 'leaders in the field'. As such, non-users and those who were not recognised by their managers and/or colleagues as 'social media savvy' were under-represented in the sample.

Table 1 outlines the full sample of interviewees - 32 Participants, 40 interviews - illustrating a) the agency, b) department/media platform they worked for and c) the method by which they were interviewed.

Table Key:

^ One interviewee changed job role between interviews and is therefore counted separately in both the Text and Multimedia categories but only once in the overall total number of participants and total number of interviews. Many were multiplatform newsworkers, therefore these categories suggest the primary form of content production in which the participant was engaged.

	Category	Text		Video/TV		Photo		Multimedia		Social Media		Other		Total
		In person	Email	In person	Email	In person	Email	In person	Email	In person	Email	In person	Email	
AFP	Participants	3	3^	3	0	1+1 Skype	1	6^	0	0	0	2	0	
AFP	Total number of participants	4^		3		3		6^		0		2		**18^**
AFP	Total number of interviews	7^		4		3		8^		0		3		**24**
AP	Participants	0	2	2	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	1+1 Skype	0	0	0	
AP	Total number of participants	2		2		0		N/A		2		0		**7**
AP	Total number of interviews	2		2		0		N/A		2		0		**7**
Reuters	Participants	0	1	2	0	4	1	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	
Reuters	Total number of participants	1		2		5		N/A		0		0		**8**
Reuters	Total number of interviews	1		3		6 (1 WebEx)		N/A		0		0		**10**

Breakdown by Role

Reporters/journalists/editors: **21**   (13 AFP + 3 AP + 5 Reuters)

Managers/Managing editors: **11**   (4 AFP + 3 AP + 4 Reuters)

Technology specialists: **1**   (AFP)

(The two social media specialists are counted in their respective roles as manager and journalist.)

Sociology of news scholars argue that newsworkers must be understood within the context in which they operate. According to Gans, relying only on interviews, the researcher "can get only reports of behavior, but not behavior itself" (Gans, 1962: 345) and as Reese points out analysing practices and behaviour "is particularly important in the news media, given the lofty ideals that journalists often cite while engaged in their routine practices" (Reese 2009). In recognition of this, an element of observation was incorporated into the research design - but only a very limited amount was possible due to restrictions of access and the researcher's resources. It is important then to recognise that the choice to use interviewing, which enables analysis of what newsworkers say they think and do, not what they do, impacts on the nature of findings. Accounts of newswork can be predictive of observed behaviour but can also be misleading (Pager and Quillian 2005: 358) and as such are treated in this research as helping to illuminate newsworkers' orientations to action and interaction in relation to social media, and not portrayed directly as evidence of it (except when accounts could be assessed and corroborated alongside observational data). The research seeks to make the process of inference involved in interpreting quotes explicit (Becker and Geer 1957) through analytical discussion of interview data that draws from appropriate literature. It is cautious of drawing links between measurement of attitudes and associated practice and seeks to make sure conclusions drawn from this type of data are explained and situated in the context of being derived from individual accounts.

4.5.5 Non-participant Observation

A small amount of observational data was collected during the interview period at the London newsrooms. However this was only possible in an ad-hoc manner and

comparable amounts were not possible across all three sites. Newsroom ethnographies showed the usefulness of observation for documenting professional practices and culture and bringing to light 'taken-for-granted' assumptions (see Cottle 2007). Direct observation is useful because it allows for the researcher to observe events in real time and in context thus enabling the researcher to construct their own account of news production activity through field notes, sketches, maps, images (photographs and video) and audio. Though longer periods of observation were sought, only short sessions were achieved – five days intermittent observation and access to an editorial meeting with AFP, one day intermittent observation with Reuters and a short tour around the newsroom with AP. Observation is particularly time-consuming for both the researcher and organisation/participants and often necessitates overcoming significant barriers to access in news organisations. Furthermore, the researcher's own selectivity shapes what is accounted for and how, meaning that elements of importance may be missed and researcher bias cannot be entirely mitigated. The observer's presence might also cause change in the environment under scrutiny. This considered, the observation achieved provided vital insight into the news production setting in which many newsworkers work (particularly desk editors and managers). It also allowed the researcher to observe newsworkers' engagement with social media technologies and the devices and software through which they were accessed as well as to gauge how often and in what circumstances they were being used. This played an important role in building an informed idea of the processes, practices, social circumstances and physical locations described by newsworkers in interviews and allowed the cross-comparison with interview data. Observing the news production process in action at this pivotal location gave crucial insights into the socio-material infrastructure as it is assembled in the newsroom, contributing contextual information to help interpret the other types of data.

4.6 Ethical Research Considerations

Ethical considerations apply to all research. This chapter has explained how the researcher has worked to ensure the quality of the research by devising a coherent and appropriate plan. A core consideration in this was to guarantee integrity and ethical soundness in the research design and application. Ethical approval was gained from the ethics committee at the researcher's university (Liverpool John Moores) prior to data

collection and plans were put in place to guide the research from data collection through to analysis, completion and publication. Working with human subjects necessitates a rigorous process for ensuring a moral and principled execution of research. As such, all participants were involved voluntarily and informed consent was sought from them prior to their involvement in interview or observation (see Appendix 10). The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was respected at all times, for example, if an interviewee could be identified from their job role and desired anonymity, a different way of describing them in the thesis was devised in order to ensure this was respected. There was low risk of harm to participants but where concerns were identified, methods of ensuring this was mitigated were instituted. For instance, if newsworkers were uncomfortable talking in an open newsroom due to worries that colleagues and bosses could overhear them and may respond negatively, a more private location was found and they were approached in a discreet manner. For the SNS analysis, screenshots were all anonymised. The independence and impartiality of this research from vested interests was assured both materially, by having no exchange of money, goods or services, and conceptually by following a pre-defined set of processes formulated to respond only to the aims of the research as devised independently from stakeholders.

Some of the subject matter and several of the methods and techniques in this study fulfil criteria identified for the field of internet research[32]. All digital information derived from these methods at some point involves individual persons therefore consideration of principles related to research on human subjects is also necessary for these aspects (Markham and Buchanan 2012). Nissenbaum's concept of contextual integrity (2010) is a valuable construct here for helping decide in the context of this particular study what the expectations of the persons related to the internet research may be and how to respect them. For example, when utilising the data sets from Twitter and Facebook for the analysis of SNS activity (Chapter 5) the terms of service for these sites - which are legal documents and are constantly evolving - must be considered as well as how the GNAs and newsworkers involved in content production on the sites expect their data to be used. In this case, no legal breaches were envisaged or incurred and there was a reasonable

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[32] Specifically, this thesis's approach (a) utilises the internet to collect data or information, through online interviews, data collection and archiving; (b) studies how people use and access the internet and internet technologies, through observing and collecting data on journalists' practices, activities and discussion on social network sites; (c) utilises and analyses datasets available via the internet (from social network sites); (d) employs textual analysis to study internet-facilitated writings, images, and media forms (on social network sites) and; (e) studies mid-scale use of internet-based social network sites by an industry sector (Markham and Buchanan 2012).

expectation that content published on the public-facing account pages of these SNSs, which was accessible without restrictions (e.g. login/password), could be repurposed for academic research. This was confirmed with GNA managers. However any reference to personal accounts was anonymised to ensure that the networked aspect of these technologies did not inadvertently bring other people into the process without their consent. With regards to email interviews and observation, newsworkers acknowledged when formally agreeing to participate that the substance of their communication was to be made public through research outputs and negotiated whether and to what extent they required anonymity.

4.7 Limitations

The researcher recognises that much like the journalism this research purports to study, the thesis risks reflecting the approaches taken and the contextual influences under which it was produced as much as it does the object of study. An inevitable limitation of any research is that in narrowing the field in order to focus in depth on a specific area and by adopting a conceptual and theoretical stance with the aim of yielding fruitful, significant and academically situated results, the research filters the world through this lens and thus disregards much of what could – if viewed alternatively – be interesting and important. For example, a notable limitation of this work revolves around its core focus on *the use* of social media and understandings of social media by those who use it, which precludes the gathering of data on non-use or opposition to use. This was deemed an unavoidable area of oversight: it was challenging to gain an adequate response rate even amongst the active user population of GNA newsworkers and on balance, including non-users was not warranted for the time and resource costs it would have incurred and because it was not central to responding to the research questions. (One interview was conducted with a journalist who didn't use social media and though attempts were made to elicit relevant information about this non-interaction with the technology, very little useful information was gained.)

The approach also tends towards highlighting commonalities at the expense of differentiations between organisations in order to construct analysis of global news agencies as a cultural group (which shares a culture of practice) and as such also prioritises the similarities in newsworkers' use and understandings of social media over

the divergences. Recognising that all research needs boundaries and a clear, tight focus, this was deemed an appropriate restriction on the scope of the research. The deliberate choice of this approach was underpinned by the strategic aims of the research and every effort was made to incorporate important nuances representing key divergences in the analysis and in the Appendices. Furthermore, due to the focus of this research on one small element of production (social media practice) and the fact that there are significant gaps in knowledge about the general day-to-day functioning of GNAs, the thesis may risk overstating the importance of social media to these organisations and in some cases generating as many questions and areas in need of further investigation as it answers. As much context and qualifying statements as possible were included to counter this by situating the findings in the wider picture of GNA news production.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the questions, aims and objectives of the research and summarised the methodological approach taken through discussion of research strategy, design, and methods. It has explained how the qualitative approach is informed by social constructivism and shaped by the theoretical framework of cultures of practice (outlined in Chapter 3). This chapter explained in detail the choice of research sites and research participants as well as the methods and techniques of data collection and analysis. It has outlined ethical issues that relate to the conduct of this research and detailed the measures taken to address these issues. The following three chapters (5, 6 and 7) present the findings of each section of empirical work followed by a combined discussion and analysis chapter (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by presenting the principal findings and making suggestions for future research whilst highlighting the relevance of the research for pertinent academic fields and the practice of GNA journalism.

Chapter 5. Results of Analysis of Organisational SNS Activity

(In)Visible Giants: Social Networking the News

5.1 Summary

This chapter explains how GNAs are using social media at an organisational level. It argues that in addition to existing practices, they are now *social networking the news*, i.e. using social media technologies and the digital and networked practices they afford to fulfil journalistic goals. The chapter analyses the findings of a comparative analysis of GNAs' social network site activity, based on a two-stage analysis of posts from each agency's main English-language Twitter and Facebook account (see 4.5.3 for explanation of method and Appendix 8 for example completed coding schedules). It finds three overarching categories of activity displayed by GNAs on both SNSs: Traditional, Connective and Sharing, and Interactive. It also identifies six common themes that fit within these categories: limited interaction; displaying and hyperlinking to proprietary material; linking to own website and social media websites; using journalistic conventions; using SNS conventions and; hybridisation of conventions.

The chapter argues that the flow of information on SNSs is largely a one-way channel out from the organisation, with no examples of attempts to gather information and very few examples on interaction or dialogue with other social media users on the organisational accounts analysed[33]. The image that emerges of the agency-audience/user relationship is one characterised by the traditional mass media distribution model. Interaction is minimal on the organisational accounts: although the functionality exists for GNAs to engage in dialogue and conversation with social media users, and this forms a well-documented part of the culture of practice associated with social media, this

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[33] The method of analysing all tweets and Facebook posts, including replies and interaction with other users and their posts, enabled an assessment of: whether information was being sought and gathered using posts; if GNAs were using these accounts to interact and reply to users in order to gather information into the organisation; and if that information could be seen flowing in. This was not observed and interview data supported this assessment as newsworkers described instead using individual accounts for this purpose. It is likely that this method does not capture all of the way newsworkers could have been reacting to other users, for example they could have been monitoring or 'listening' for tip-offs and useful information, which they then followed up in other ways that are not traced here, or could have used personal accounts to contact users who had posted comments and replies to the organisational accounts. As such, this assessment of flow in describes only what can be evidenced from observed social media activity.

affordance is perceived but not activated. The chapter also argues that hybrid conventions have been developed by the agencies, through their efforts to co-opt a strategic selection of SNS practices whilst retaining traditional journalistic conventions of practice.

The chapter opens by explaining GNA strategies for using social media at an organisational level, highlighting similarities in their approaches. It then explains and discusses common trends and patterns in their activity on Twitter and Facebook, explaining six key themes with reference to pertinent illustrations. The findings are then discussed in relation to literature identified in Chapter 2 and the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3 to suggest their implications for GNA journalism.

5.2 Introduction: Increasing Importance of Social Media @ GNAs

As foregrounded in the literature review, scholars have overlooked social media technology as the focus of research in news agency studies. Despite indications of important changes at global news agencies linked to their use of social media, there has been extremely little empirical work looking at social media at GNAs and none comparing all three GNA contexts. Moreover, to date there have been no analyses of the nature of their SNS activity. This chapter addresses this gap.

Social media have, since around 2009-2010, become a central part of the agencies' journalism process and now play an important role in their infrastructure, particularly for agency-public/audience communication (Molla 2012a; 2012b). Steady growth in internal documentation of the process through agency press releases and memos on the subject attests to the agencies' own recognition of the growing importance of social media for their work (Agence France-Presse 2010a; 2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2013a; 2013c, Associated Press 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2013a, Reuters 2012). GNAs have steadily increased integration of references and links to these technologies into their public-facing websites and into their news services. Traces of social media use are visible in the form of hyperlinks to organisational or individual newsworkers' social media profiles, which are strategically and pervasively placed throughout their online content. For example, AP indicate on their website that social media - and in particular Twitter - can be one of the best methods of contacting newsworkers (see Figure 1). AP also now includes their journalists' Twitter handles at the end of most text stories on the wire service (see Figure 2) and have even purchased a stake in live video social media site Bambuser with which it had been partnering since 2010 (AP 2013d). Since 2013, AP have had an agreement

with the site providing exclusivity for syndication of real-time video from those users that opt into the arrangement. This example demonstrates a willingness to formalise co-operation with social media sites.

These are pertinent illustrations of the growing importance of social media but most revealing in this regard are the GNA website homepages. All three GNAs have since 2009 developed increasingly visible links to a selection of social media sites. The Associated Press first included a short-term link to social media on its homepage in October 2009 (linking to a sport related AP Twitter handle to promote a book) and by February 2010 it had added a constant link to "Follow AP on Facebook and Twitter". References and links to social media on the homepage have increased in number and variation since then. Similarly, Reuters first included a link to social media – in this case Facebook – on the website homepage in August 2010 and has in a similar manner continually increased their presence, as has Agence France-Presse. The agencies however place varying emphasis on social media on their websites. For example, in 2013 AFP prominently featured links to many of their social media profiles and displayed numerous interactive examples of social-media hosted content on their homepage, suggesting that they perceived social media to be of particular importance in the consumer context (Figure 3). AP included less prominent references, with two discrete sections at the top and bottom of the homepage, which have icons that link to four of their social media accounts (Figure 4). Reuters had similar discrete links located on a single line, which was accorded little prominence at the top and bottom of their homepage. It contained icons linking to three social media sites (Figure 5) but also layered their links using a drop-down menu to display a wider selection.

There are notable similarities in the agencies' approaches, including the prominence of Twitter and Facebook and the characterisation of social media as a method for members of the public to get in touch with the organisation. There are also slight variations in the manner and extent to which social media are integrated into each GNA's web design, which implies that there may also be subtle differences in their approaches to organisational use of social media. For example, Reuters describe social media as ways to "connect" and "sign in" with them, whilst AP frame them as ways to "follow" the agency whilst both reserve a different method for "contacting" the agency, which links to the more traditional methods of communication of email and telephone. AFP in contrast combines all methods of communicating with the agency under the single header of

"Contact Us"[34]. This serves only as an example but it illustrates that there are important overarching similarities and is at the same time a reminder that social media may be conceptualised slightly differently in each context.

Taking the comparison of approaches to organisational use of social media as the broader setting, the following analysis of SNS activity focuses on highlighting the overarching similarities in organisational use of Twitter and Facebook at the three agencies, whilst noting and explicating the key differences. It begins with an illustrated explanation of each GNA's presence on Twitter and Facebook, followed by an illustrative exploration of each GNA's use of these two SNSs based on an in-depth qualitative analysis of their activity, such as posts, interactions etc. Analysis of the comprehensive output of SNS activity during one week is combined with targeted analysis of one month's worth of activity on the agencies' main English-language Twitter and Facebook accounts (see 4.5.3 for method). The chapter then discusses the findings of a comparative analysis of this data and concludes with explanation of how this relates to the GNA culture of practice.

The chapter argues that adoption of social media has impacted organisational public-facing communication and news distribution practices - GNAs are now *social networking the news*. It proposes that although a traditional mass distribution approach clearly characterises most organisational SNS activity there are several noteworthy changes in the GNA culture of practice, including the incorporation of connective and sharing practices as well as limited interactive engagement with SNS users/audience.

Figure 1: Screenshot of one of the 'Frequently Asked Questions' on AP's website

- How do I contact a reporter or editor?

   Many of AP's reporters and editors are now on Twitter, which can be the best way to reach a journalist directly; check the lists at http://apne.ws/A8cS5L. You can also send an email to info@ap.org with the name of the journalist in the subject line, and it will be forwarded along.

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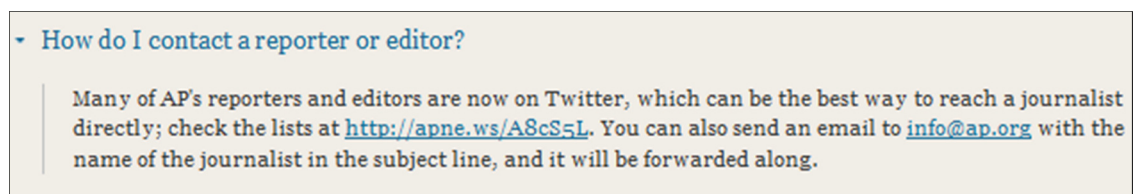
[34] It should be noted that the email icon is listed in first position, indicating its pre-eminence.

Figure 2: Screenshot of credit at base of AP wire story with journalists' Twitter handles

> "There were thousands of other examples we could have used," Walker said, "and that would have been preferred."
>
> ⸻
>
> Thomas reported from Washington.
>
> ⸻
>
> Follow Ken Thomas on Twitter: http://twitter.com/AP_Ken_Thomas and Scott Bauer: http://twitter.com/sbauerAP
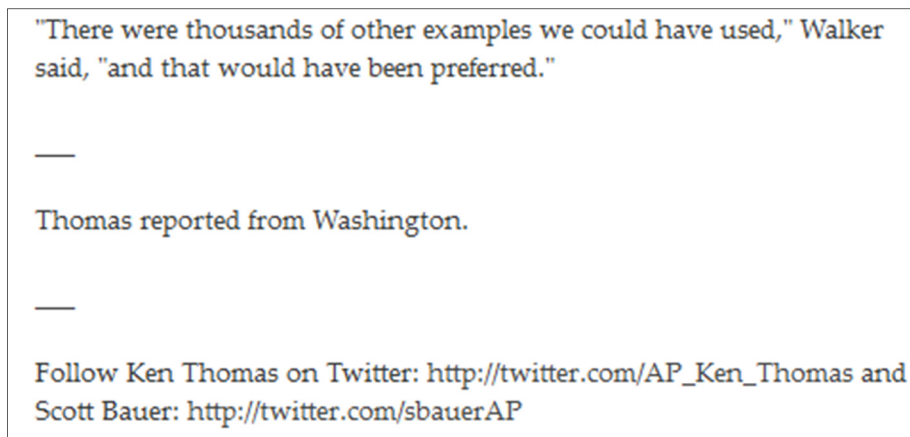
Figure 3: Annotated screenshot of AFP's public-facing website homepage

Figure 4: Annotated screenshot of AP's public-facing website homepage
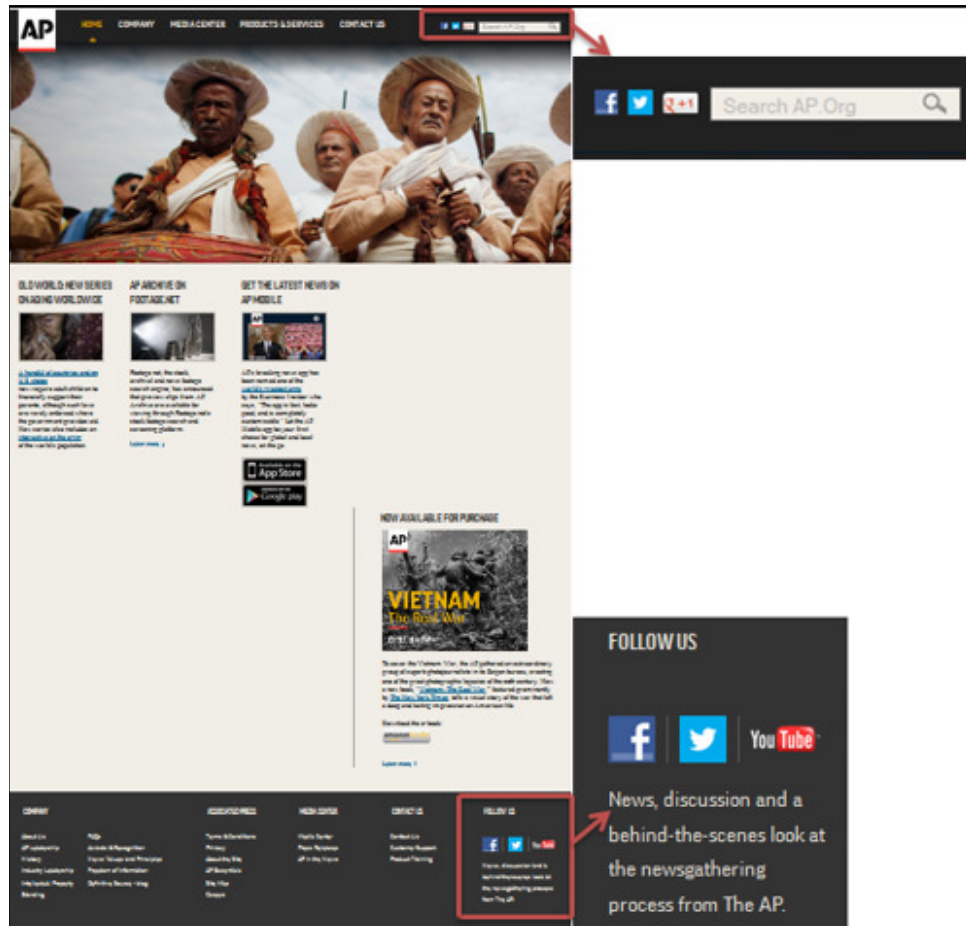
Figure 5: Annotated screenshot of Reuters' public-facing website homepage

5.3 Global News Agencies on Twitter

All three agencies were active on Twitter. Reuters was the first to set up their primary English language account on Twitter on 20.03.2007 under the handle @Reuters. This was particularly early considering that Twitter had only been created a year earlier in March 2006 and was still a very niche service (Boulton 2008). At the time of writing in November 2013, the account had 3,559,676 followers and 94,864 tweets – both figures higher than those of the other agencies. The Associated Press set up their primary organisational account - @AP - on 26.06.2009, which at the time of writing had in excess of 2,640,147 followers and had tweeted over 66,134 times. AFP was notably later in creating organisational accounts, launching an English language Twitter account - @AFP - on 26.09.2011 (its French account, @afpfr, was created earlier that year on 20.07.2011). With 116,823 followers and 34,499 tweets it was the least followed of all the agencies.[35]

It is these primary English-language accounts that are of most interest in this research and are analysed in this chapter. However, it is important to note that all GNAs have numerous other Twitter accounts linked to the organisation or to groups within the agency as well as to individual journalists. Group accounts *all* include the company name in the handle and almost all use the agency logo as the associated picture. Some are related to geographic area (e.g. @ReutersCanada, @AP_Boston, @AFPLille), to type of media content/platform (e.g. @ReutersTV, @AP_Images, @AFPphoto) and to specific organisational services (e.g. @ReutersMedia, @AP_CorpComm and @AFPMakingof) and others to category/genre of content (e.g. @ReutersTech, @AP_Fashion, @AFPSport) or language (e.g. @Reuters_Arabic, @AP_Noticias, @AFPde)[36].

This provides only a snapshot in time: due to the dynamic nature of social media, the number and nature of accounts is constantly changing[37]. It was however clear that from the start of this research in 2009, the use of organisational accounts had grown significantly and that significant time and effort has been expended on creating and

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[35] The French language account had more followers (251,871) and more tweets (73,609) than the English account, reflecting the origins and market of the agency.

[36] Not all of the accounts have been verified by Twitter but a large proportion have.

[37] The number of accounts changes regularly and it is difficult to verify the veracity of accounts as there were no definitive lists provided by the agencies. Any count would therefore represent only a specific moment in time. For example: in October 2013, the researcher found that AP had 35 accounts, of which 20 appear on the list of 'official' handles found on their Corporate Communications Twitter page; in August 2013 AFP stated that it had more than a dozen accounts on Twitter (and others on Facebook, Google+, Tumblr, LindkedIn, YouTube and Daily Motion), whilst the researcher found 20 Twitter accounts to be active but not all verified.

maintaining these accounts, which is indicative of the growing importance of Twitter to the agencies (see Figure 6 for screenshots of each agency's Twitter profile).

5.4 Global News Agencies on Facebook

All three GNAs set up organisational Facebook accounts in 2010. The site had been open to the general public since 2006. The Associated Press created a primary English language Facebook page on 13.01.2010. Reuters then set up their main account on 15.04.2010[38] and AFP created an English language Facebook account on 25.10.2010 (whilst its French account was created earlier that year on 03.05.2010). Unlike Twitter, Facebook does not have a "follow" feature which indicates how many other users have created a continuous link to the page, however the "Like" button plays a somewhat comparable function by expressing interest in the page and allowing Facebook to create a link between the user and the page, which enables the sharing of data. At the time of writing in November 2013, Reuters had 1,032,379 "Likes", followed by AP with 171,881 "Likes" and AFP with 64,863 "Likes".

AP and Reuters also had other organisational accounts on Facebook but these were notably less numerous than on Twitter. They related to geographic area (e.g. Associated Press Iowa, Reuters India), type of media content/platform (e.g. AP Images) specific organisational services (e.g. AP Stylebook, Reuters Insider) and category/genre of content (e.g. AP Live, Reuters Entertainment) or language (e.g. Reuters News Deutschland). AFP did not have a range of organisational accounts, only the French and English language pages. Figure 7 contains screenshots of each agency's Facebook profile.

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[38] AP constructed their page to look back over the agency's history by adding posts about relevant events from 1846 when it was founded and the Reuters timeline traces the agency's history back to January 1st 1816, when it was founded.

Figure 6: Screenshots of the profile page of each agency's Twitter feed

Figure 7: Screenshot of each agency's Facebook profile
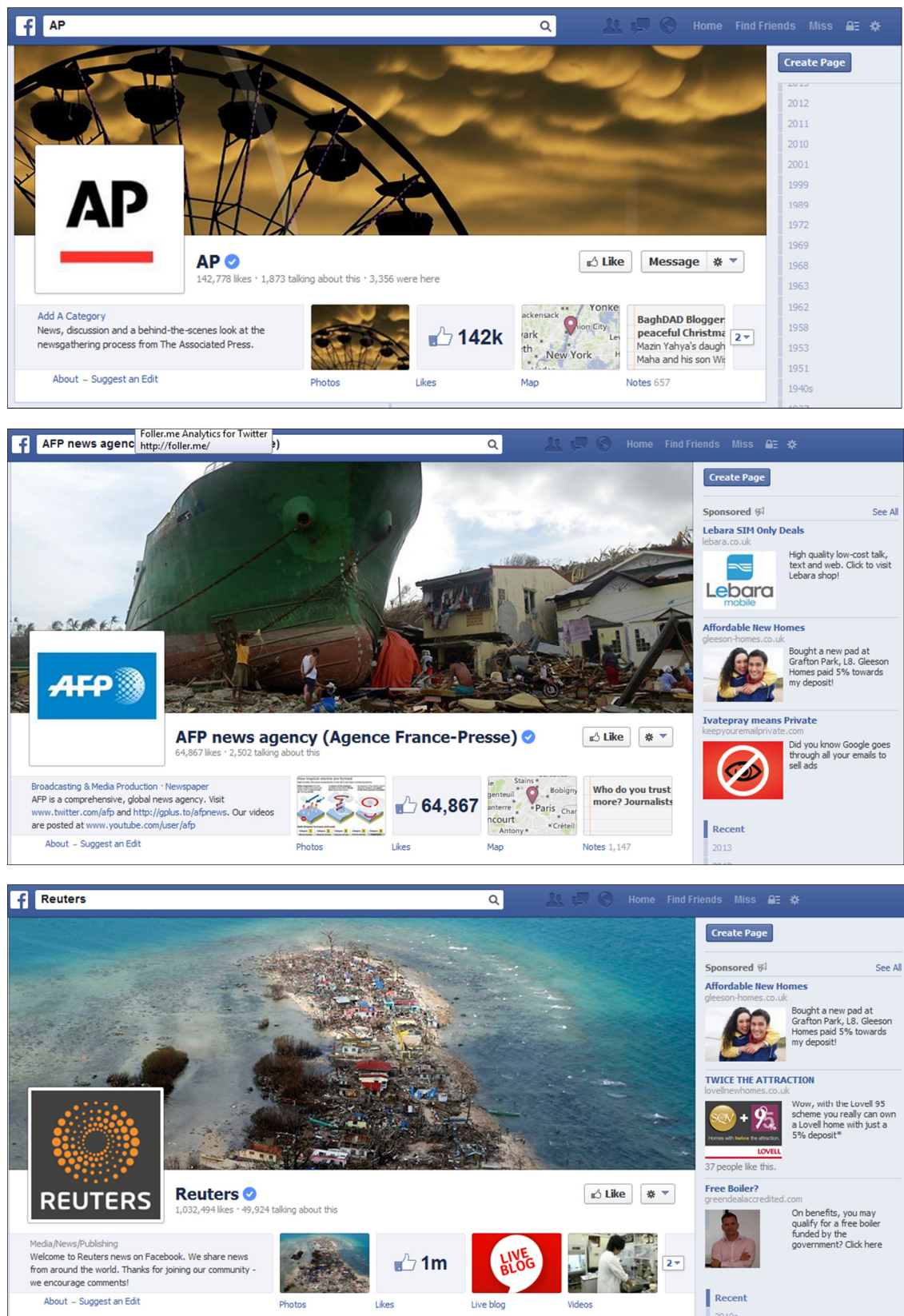
5.5 Three Tiers of Organisational Use of SNSs

The analysis found three overarching categories of activity and six common themes displayed by all three agencies on both SNSs (see Table 2 for overview). Overall, SNS activity was found to be very similar across all three GNA accounts, suggesting a highly standardised approach to the use of SNSs.[39]

The first category, which was most prevalent, was **traditional activity**: the types of activity grouped under this category were termed 'traditional' as they continue in line with services that GNAs have always provided. The two broad types of activity were a) *distributing proprietary news content* and b) *promoting agency services*. Although the agencies were clearly transferring established norms and traditional practices to the social media space, the affordances of SNSs are also enabling them to conduct what is referred to here as **'connective and sharing' activity**. This second category involves the use of a number of SNS functions and conventions of practice, which have at times been hybridised with the aforementioned journalistic conventions. Finally, GNA use of SNSs showed a very small amount of **interactive activity**. Though SNSs have been noted for their capacity to facilitate interaction between journalists/news organisations and users/audiences, there was rather little evidence of this third category, representing interaction, conversation or discussion with other users.

These findings (see Table 2) are drawn from analysis of a week-long hand-coded sample of 1,038 tweets and 78 Facebook posts and a month-long hand-coded sample of 4,718 tweets and 100 Facebook posts (see 4.5.3 for full details of method). The aim of this chapter's analysis of the type of activity conducted on the primary English language GNA accounts on Twitter and Facebook is to provide an indication of trends and patterns in organisational use of these SNSs – it is not meant to be an exhaustive account of *all* types of activity that the agencies engage in on these SNSs, or be representative of their activity in its entirety.

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[39] A press release from AFP indicates how standardised this can be, explaining that AFP have a pre-defined production process for Facebook posts, which includes "two to three AFP stories a day – one a top world news story, another a top sports news story, and a third that is a feature, interview or exclusive that showcases AFP strengths" (2010a). It explains that posts can be accompanied by questions "where appropriate" as well as "A photo of the day with caption" and "A video of the day with caption", information about the agency and will contain "permalinks to the AFP websites" (ibid).

Table 2: Categories of SNS activity developed from coding table

CATEGORY	TYPE OF ACTIVITY	THEME
1.Traditional	*Distribution:* Publishing proprietary news content *Promotion:* Publishing self-promotional content	**Theme 1:** Displaying and hyperlinking to proprietary material **Theme 2:** Linking to own website and social media websites **Theme 3:** Using Journalistic Conventions *Anomaly: AFP linking to clients' websites*
2.Connective & Sharing	*Leveraging the SNS network by using SNS functions* Retweets, modified tweets, embedded links to other accounts, e.g. @ mention/embedded hypertext (when not part of a two-way dialogue), lists, favourites, hashtags, 'Likes', 'Shares' and other automated social plug-ins.	**Theme 4:** Using SNS Conventions **Theme 5:** Hybridisation of Conventions
3.Interactive	*Conversation:* Two-way (or multi-way) dialogue and interactivity (e.g. asking a question and getting a response).	**Theme 6:** Limited interaction with other users

5.6 Category 1: Traditional Activity

The most prevalent category was traditional activity: that which continues in line with services that GNAs have always provided. GNAs were transferring established norms and traditional practices to the social media space by a) distributing proprietary news content and b) promoting agency services.

Activity 1: **Distribution**

The core service of GNAs is the timely distribution of news. This was also by far the most common activity on SNSs by all agencies. This practice consisted of creating posts containing news content, which usually included embedded hyperlinks, connecting to proprietary agency news content hosted online (see Figure 8 and Figure 9). Hyperlinks allow users to direct each other in digital spaces while displaying their own interests in content (De Maeyer 2012, Holton et al., 2014). On SNSs, the agencies were directing others only to their own content thus overwhelmingly expressing interest only in their own news coverage. This implies a rather inward-looking approach to activity in these spaces in which more diverse, networked approaches to content distribution are common.

Activity 2: **Promotion**

GNAs have also always had to promote their services, although in the past this was exclusively aimed at clients and took place away from the public eye. On SNSs, the agencies continue to promote their content and services, suggesting that they use these accounts as a promotional tool to raise brand awareness. News organisations have been shown to commonly use social media for marketing and to promote their brand by directing people to their content (Broersma and Graham 2012; Dickinson 2011). GNAs were found to engage in sporadic self-promotion, mixing promotional content in amongst news content on both SNSs. For example, AP pointed users to its Twitter lists, AFP promoted their other Twitter accounts, and Reuters regularly directed people to its 'top photos' (see Figure 10). This trend was the same on Facebook (see Figure 12). AP was the only GNA to incorporate advertisements from external actors in the form of sponsored tweets (see Figure 11). Alongside advertising on their web pages and mobile applications, this AP seeking to create revenue from its free-to-consumer services (AP 2013a).

Figure 8: Screenshots of the most common type of activity (distribution) on GNA Twitter accounts
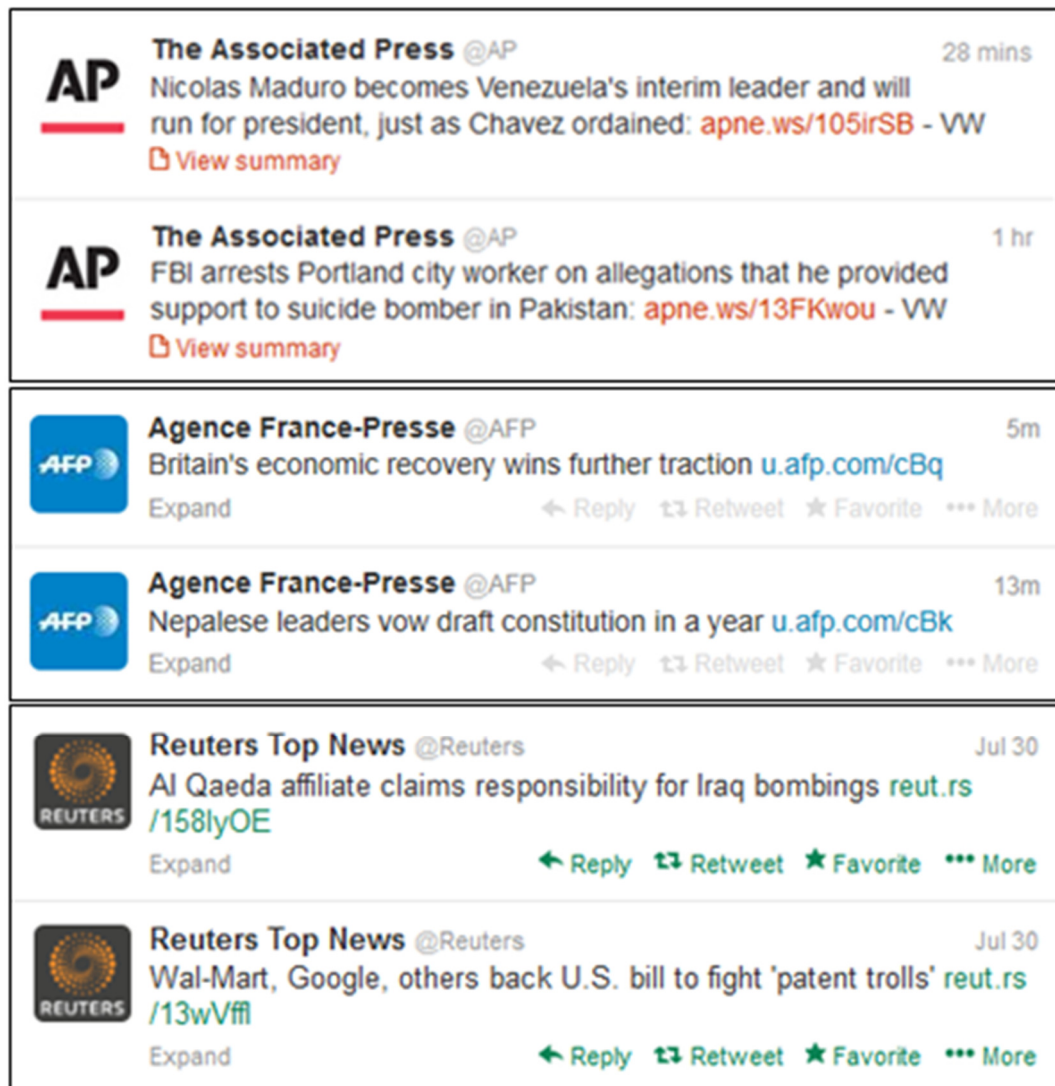
Figure 9: Screenshots of the most common type of activity (distribution) on GNA Facebook accounts

Figure 10: Screenshots of GNA promotional activity on Twitter

Figure 11: Screenshot of AP 'sponsored tweet'

Figure 12: Screenshots of AP, AFP and Reuters promotional activity on Facebook

Reuters changed their cover photo.
18 hours ago · Edited

Schoolchildren hold candles and portraits of former South African President Nelson Mandela during a prayer ceremony at a school in the southern Indian city of Chennai December 6, 2013. REUTERS/Babu

Our top photos from the past 24 hours http://blogs.reuters.com/fullfocus/2013/12/06/editors-choice-21/#a=1

AP shared a link.
17 hours ago

The liftoff of a SpaceX rocket, Hezbollah fighters carrying the coffin of a senior commander, and a total cloud inversion at the Grand Canyon National Park are among #AP10ThingsToSee this week:

10 Things to See: A week of top AP photos
apne.ws

Here's your look at highlights from the weekly AP photo report, a gallery featuring a mix of front-page

AFP news agency (Agence France-Presse) shared a link.
December 3

AFP journalist Amélie Bottollier-Depois recently visited Philippine communities ravaged by typhoon #Haiyan, on a lightning-fast assignment accompanying a US military aid mission.

5.6.2 Theme 1 - Displaying and Linking to Proprietary Material

SNSs are being used by GNAs principally as a new tool for distributing proprietary news content and the news they host is mainly that which has been produced for other platforms. The most fundamental GNA practice has always been distributing proprietary news material to clients and this has always been accomplished via the wire services but since the agencies established their own consumer-facing websites, this news service has also been provided in a limited fashion to the online audience. SNSs are being used to extend this mass distribution practice to the social media space with little editorial effort. Small snippets of content are directly transferred or adapted from that produced for clients on the wires and turned into SNS posts, which usually hyperlink back to the original piece. Hyperlinking is an intrinsic feature of the web, used as a way to reference data that the reader-user can directly follow by clicking[40]. All the agencies used hyperlinks in the vast majority of their social media posts to link to material hosted on the web, as illustrated in Figure 13 and Table 3. Importantly, they linked almost exclusively to their own content.

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[40] The hyperlink can also connect to data by hovering over the hypertext or it can be followed automatically, e.g. through 'crawling'.

Figure 13: Prevalence of hyperlinks in SNS posts (week-long samples)
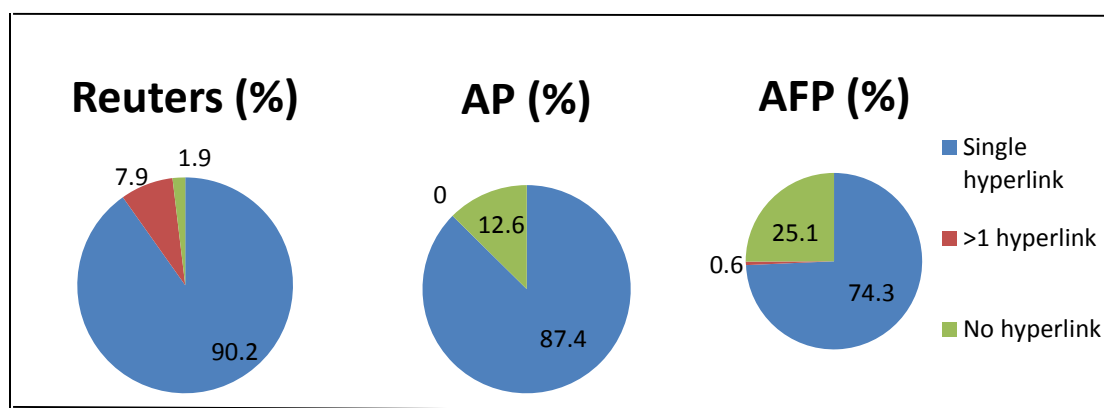
Table 3: Breakdown of hyperlinks in agency posts (week-long samples)

	Twitter			Facebook		
	1 link	*>1 link*	*No link*	*1 link*	*>1 link*	*No link*
AFP	86.5%	1.1%	12.4%	62.2%	-	37.8%
AP	90.7%	-	9.3%	84%	-	16%
Reuters	92.8%	3.3%	3.9%	87.5%	12.5%	-
Average	90%	1.1%	8.5%	77.9%	4.2%	17.9%

Figure 14: Screenshot of an AFP Twitter post displaying proprietary content

5.6.3 Theme 2 - Linking to Own Website and Own Content

All agencies linked to their own websites, referred to here as 'internal' linking. This trend was most prominent for AP and Reuters, which both prioritised their own websites in links, than for AFP (see *Anomaly* section below). They also all linked to social media sites - YouTube and Twitter were the most common - but as described in Theme 1, the embedded links only ever led to proprietary agency content. Table 4 illustrates this trend - it combines data from the week-long Twitter and Facebook samples.

AP primarily linked to its own webpages; in the week-long Twitter sample which contained 529 links, only 19 connected to a website other than that of AP. These were to YouTube - which hosts an AP video channel (17) - and to Twitter (2) - connecting to AP's Twitter lists of newsworkers (see Figure 15). Of the 21 links in the week-long Facebook sample, 20 were internal and only 1 link was external, connecting to YouTube. No links directed to external web pages such as those of other news organisations, individuals or clients.

Of the 174 tweets containing links in the Reuters week-long Twitter sample, 171 contained 173 links to Reuters web pages. The only 'external' links to non-Reuters web pages were the 7 Twitter links through which Reuters' proprietary content was displayed (see Figure 16). In the week-long Facebook sample, the vast majority of the posts (14/16) contained a link to the Reuters website and the other 2 posts connected to the Reuters YouTube channel (3 YouTube links in total).

Similarly, AFP linked to social media sites and to its own website however in a break from this theme, this GNA most frequently linked to client news organisations' websites[41] (see Figure 17). This shows a different approach to the other two agencies – one which deliberately shares online traffic with clients.

In the week-long Twitter sample, tweets most commonly linked to client websites hosting AFP content (208/274 tweets). Of these, the most common were news aggregator websites (169 hyperlinks in total) led by Google News, to which almost half of the links connected (134), and Yahoo! (35). This was followed by news organisations' websites (39) and a total of 31 social media links: to Twitter itself (16) and to AFP's proprietary

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[41] Google is considered here to be a client of AFP. After a long legal dispute Google and AFP settled in court in 2007 (without disclosing details of the agreement) allowing Google to host AFP content, however whether Google is paying for this service or not, they remain a client (Perez 2007).

channel on YouTube (15) (see Figure 18). The only 4 links connecting to AFP's own website linked to their blog (3) and AFP's in-house photo platform ImageForum (1).

Of the 23 posts in the week-long Facebook sample, which contained 32 hyperlinks, only 4 contained 'internal' links, all leading to an AFP blog site, whilst 19 were external links to client websites which hosted AFP material (6 Yahoo, 3 Google, 1 rawstory.com). Again, the most common type of site to which the account linked was news aggregator websites. The number of links to social media sites (9) followed close behind, 8 of which were to YouTube, which hosted all of the videos in the sample on AFP's own channel, whilst the other 1 link connected to AFP's Tumblr account. The predominance of links to these news aggregators are not surprising - Google and AFP settled in court in 2007, ending a long legal dispute (without disclosing the details) to allow Google to host AFP content (Perez 2007), making the company a client of AFP. Yahoo! also has a deal with AFP to provide the company with news (Agence France-Presse 2013e).

Table 4: Destination of hyperlinks on SNSs (combined week-long samples)
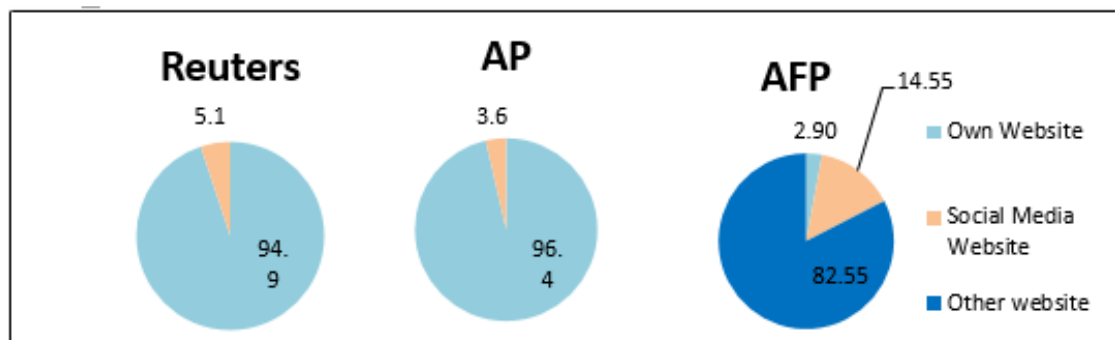
Figure 15: Screenshot of AP Twitter account linking to Twitter list of AP journalists

Figure 16: Screenshot of Reuters' use of image directly uploaded to Twitter

Figure 17: Screenshot of AFP Twitter account linking to a client website

Figure 18: Screenshot of AFP Twitter account linking to its YouTube channel
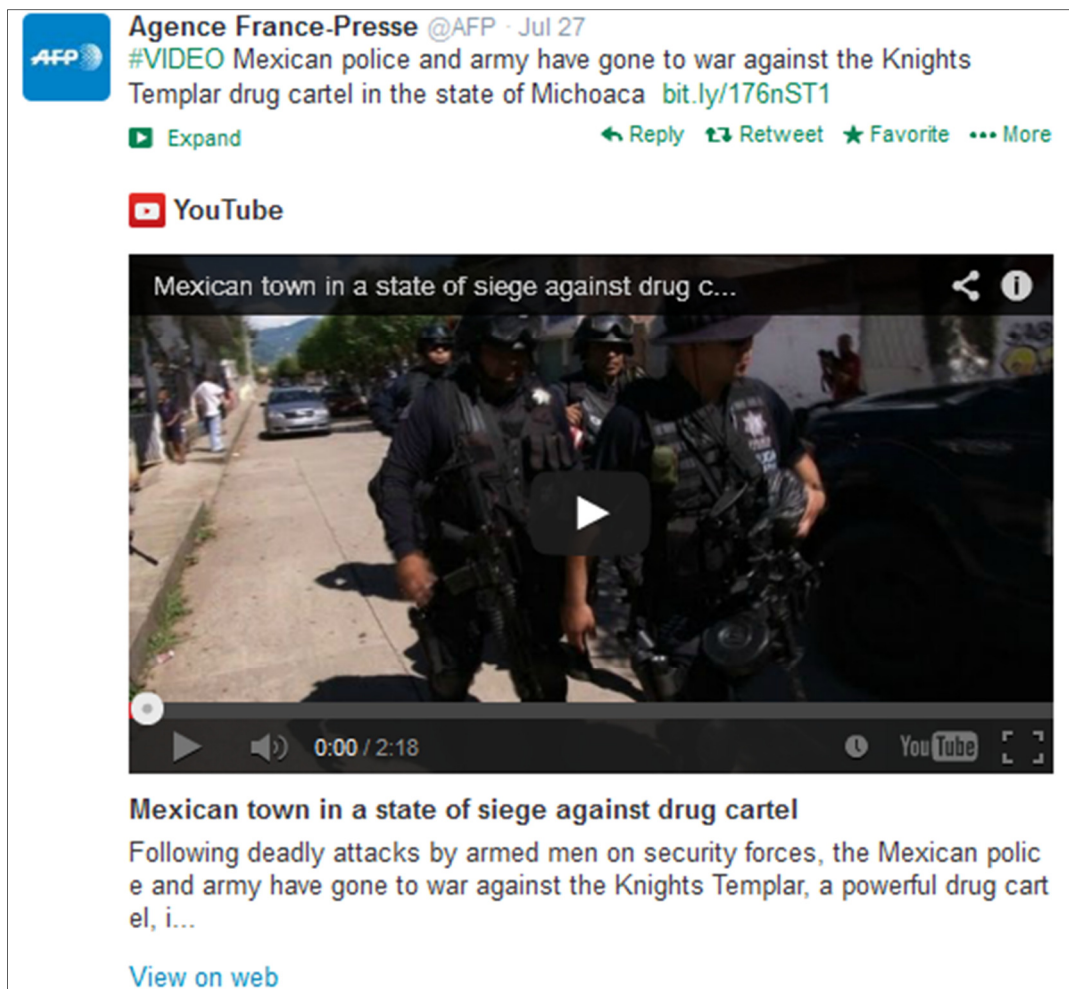
5.6.4 Theme 3 - Using Journalistic Conventions

Journalistic conventions are those practices customary to journalism and in this case, practices customary to global news agency journalism. On both Twitter and Facebook, all three agencies used several common journalistic conventions. Hermida suggests that "established news institutions have tended to rely on existing norms and practices as they have expanded into digital media" (2011b: 30) - this chapter's data supports this claim. Three key areas illustrate this point and are discussed below: *headlines, slugs, captions and credits.*

Headlines

All agencies formatted the text in the majority of tweets as headlines, directly transferring this traditional journalistic form of address to Twitter. Some of these headlines matched that of the online story to which they linked whilst others were elongated versions that incorporated more information. In the Reuters week-long Twitter sample, more than half of tweets had exactly the same headline as the content to which it linked (96/181). Of the 274 tweets in the AFP week-long sample, 48 had the same headline as in the story to which it linked and the other tweets (even when they linked to videos, infographics etc., which do not necessarily contain a headline), were almost always formatted as a headline (see Figure 19). AP tended to tweet longer style headlines than those in the online copy (see Figure 20); in the week-long AP Twitter sample, 7 of the tweets included text that matched exactly that of the headline in the story.

This practice was not as common on Facebook where post are not limited to 140 characters. Instead, Facebook posts often contained full paragraphs or quotes from the content to which they linked. This also illustrates the direct transfer of traditional content formatting practices to social media and shows how material is often copy and pasted rather than created specifically for SNS publication.

Slugs

Slugs can be defined as "a catchphrase to indicate the story content as a news story moves through production" (Zelizer and Allan 2010: 142). The use of slugs is a well-established practice in GNAs, used to attach key words to content to aid its categorisation internally and externally for clients on the wires. All three agencies' social media posts show a direct transfer of this practice to their use of SNSs. However they

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each took slightly different approaches to incorporating slugs and this trend was more prominent on Twitter than on Facebook.

AP used slug words that can be found on the wire services they provide to clients. 176 of the 583 tweets contained a slug, including: BREAKING /APNewsBreak (62); MORE (49); VIDEO/AP VIDEO/RAW VIDEO (28); PHOTO/PHOTOS/AP PHOTO/PHOTO GALLERY (24); CORRECTION/CORRECTS (50); AP INTERACTIVE (2); UPDATE, INFOGRAPHIC, AP EXCLUSIVE AP Essay, Analysis, Q&A (1), (e.g. see Figure 21). 3/25 posts in the week-long Facebook sample included a slug word (all 'BREAKING').

In the Reuters week-long Twitter sample, slug words were used but not as extensively (only 12/181) to describe the type of content to which the hyperlink connected, such as 'Insight', 'Analysis', 'Photo', 'Exclusive' (see Figure 22). In the week-long Facebook sample only two posts contained slugs - 'BREAKING' and 'Happening now'. Meanwhile AFP showed an alternative approach to using slugs, which is discussed further in Theme 5: Using hybrid conventions.

Captions

Another example of the use of established journalistic conventions was the use of captions to accompany images. All photographs and images distributed on the wires are accompanied by brief, factual descriptions of what they depict, which the client may or may not choose to use in their publication. On Twitter, AP and AFP formatted many of the tweets linking to photographs in a comparable manner to a caption that would accompany photographs on the wire (see Figure 23). Reuters however rarely used captions within tweets which contained a photograph, preferring to use headlines. On Facebook, Reuters and AFP used traditional captions whilst AP tended not to use captions.

Credits

Reuters and AFP used a variety of styles of credits to identify the authors of content on both SNSs. For example, on Facebook, when a post contained a photograph as the primary piece of content, a credit was included to the journalist who had created the image in most cases (see Figures 24 & 25)[42]. AP did not use these conventions

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[42] This form of traditional credit was not as commonplace on Reuters' Twitter account but there was one example of a credit formatted in the same way as it would be on the wires (see Figure 25).

choosing not to identify the author of the content to which the SNS posts displayed or linked, however on Twitter, they included initialled credits to the author of the tweet itself (see Figure 23). Bylines and credits identifying the individual authors of content is not as common in news agency journalism as it is in retail news as the credit will often only identify the agency itself, however the practice is also not entirely absent. This ad-hoc crediting is mirrored in the SNS spaces, where some content is posted along with a credit to individual authors, some with a credit to the agency, and some with none at all.

Figure 19: Screenshot of typical tweets with headline-style text on the AFP account

Figure 20: Screenshot of long headline in AP tweet and short headline in related story

Figure 21: Screenshot of AP using the slug BREAKING in a tweet

Figure 22: Screenshot of Reuters' use of slug words
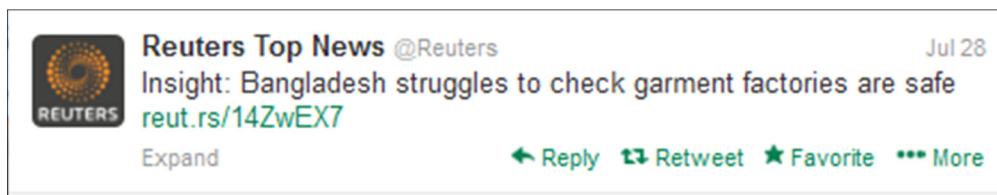
Figure 23: Screenshot of AFP and AP tweets linking to photographs with caption

Figure 24: Screenshot of AFP Facebook post containing photograph, caption and credit

AFP news agency (Agence France-Presse)
3 hours ago

A protester with a chain clashes with police during the storming of the Viktor Yanukovych Presidential office in Kiev, Ukraine, during a mass opposition rally yesterday.

The crowd chanted "Revolution!" and "Down with the Gang" as it took control of Kiev's Independence Square and steered a bulldozer to within striking distance of police barricades protecting the nearby presidential administration office.

AFP Photo/Genya Savilov

Figure 25: Screenshot of Reuters' use of caption and credit on Facebook

Reuters changed their cover photo.
8 hours ago

Ukrainian opposition leaders called on Sunday for President Viktor Yanukovich and his government to resign at a huge pro-Europe rally of about 350,000 people, marred by violent clashes between protesters and riot police. Full story: http://reut.rs/1akUMR2

In the biggest protest in the capital Kiev since the "Orange Revolution" of nine years ago, opposition leaders denounced Yanukovich for walking away from a pact offered by the European Union and swinging trade policy back toward Russia.

Continue reading: http://reut.rs/1akUMR2

Photo: People climb up onto a gate near the presidential administration building during a rally held by supporters of EU integration in Kiev, December 1, 2013. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians shouting "Down with the Gang!" rallied on Sunday against President Viktor Yanukovich's U-turn on Europe and some used a building excavator to try to break through police lines at his headquarters. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich

Figure 26: Screenshot of Reuters' and AFP's use of credit on Twitter

Reuters Top News @Reuters   Jul 29
New profile header photo: Jae Jae, a five year old Sumatran Tiger
(credit: REUTERS/Andrew Winning) #TigerDay
pic.twitter.com/Mnb5welYKo
View photo   Reply   Retweet   Favorite   More

Agence France-Presse @AFP   Aug 1
#PHOTO It's a bird, it's a plane, it's...Michal Navratil at the high
diving world championships by Javier Soriano
pic.twitter.com/BTwHtT7xfJ
View photo   Reply   Retweet   Favorite   More

5.7 Category 2: Connective & Sharing Activity

SNSs are enabling GNAs to conduct 'connective and sharing' activity. The second most prevalent category, it involves the use of SNS functions and conventions of practice, which have at times been hybridised with the aforementioned journalistic conventions.

5.7.1 Theme 4 - Using SNS Conventions

GNAs used a number of SNS conventions, including: *informal style of address, retweets, modified tweets, embedded links to other accounts, e.g. @ mention/embedded hypertext, lists, favourites, hashtags, 'Likes', 'Shares' and other automated social plug-ins.* This was evidence of GNAs leveraging the SNS network by using SNS functions and conventions of practice.

Informal style of address

SNSs host content and conversations from a multitude of diverse users and aside from illegal content, there are very few restrictions as to what can or should be posted on the sites. Their early growth as sites for interpersonal communication coupled with this freedom of expression has led to their characterisation as sites for informal and (largely) unrestricted dialogue. The GNA trend on Twitter was to format communication according to traditional journalistic style by presenting the majority of tweets like headlines, however there were examples of less formal and journalistic styles of address mixed in, including for instance the use of forms of direct address to the reader such as (often rhetorical) questions. This was more common on AFP and AP accounts than for Reuters (see Figure 27). As already noted, Facebook posts were rarely just headlines, instead they were either pertinent paragraphs or quotes directly taken or adapted from the content (as explained in Theme 3) or they were summaries of the content. In this latter practice, the same story would be introduced for the social media audience using adapted and different modes of address than in the story (see Figure 28), which tended to be less formal.

Hashtags

The hashtag function allows for all content containing a particular word/phrase to be grouped together across a SNS and is a function on both Twitter and Facebook. All agencies used the hashtag function but to differing degrees, led by AFP.

118/274 tweets in the AFP week-long sample contained 143 hashtags. The majority of hashtags were 'internal', mimicking slug words used for the wire service (95/143), which classify the story using terms related to news production, (e.g. #BREAKING, #UPDATE, #VIDEO, #PHOTO, #AFP). These 'internal'[43] hashtags function to group content primarily by its classification in the production process and the account uses the hashtag convention much less to connect to topic areas of content (48/143), e.g. #F1, #syria, #assad. The 34 tweets that contained no link in the AFP week-long sample almost always contained '#BREAKING' to indicate that they contained breaking news (33/34) and to group the content with other similarly tagged content on Twitter. In the AP week-long sample, only 22/583 tweets had hashtags, 12 of these were internal, whilst a further 15 tweets had 'external' hashtags on topics such as #pope, #Russia, #royalbaby. Hashtags were less regularly used by Reuters and were more likely to be mimicking slug words used on the wire than linking to conversations grouped around topics – there were 5 internal (#breaking) and 1 external hashtag (#TigerDay) out of 181 tweets in the week-long sample (see Figure 29).

Hashtags were much less prevalent on Facebook, which may be explained by the late introduction of the hashtag to this SNS in June 2013 (Lindley 2013). AFP used them most extensively, including 32 hashtags within 22 posts in the week-long sample, 12 of which were internal and 20 of which were external (see Figure 30). Some posts contained more than one hashtag and these were more likely to be external (20 in total), for example #animalrights, #fur, #Madiba. AP included one internal hashtag in the week-long sample whilst Reuters included none.

(@) Mentions/Embedded Facebook Links

A mention - the '@' symbol followed by the username - is the way of addressing other users on Twitter whilst on Facebook the 'tag' function is used (except when private messaging). GNAs engaged with these forms of SNS-specific connection but their use of them was limited.

Of the 274 tweets in the AFP week-long sample, 20 tweets contained 20 mentions. The account used mentions primarily to connect to 'internal' (i.e. AFP-related) accounts on Twitter (17/20) - mainly newsworkers' accounts (15) and agency accounts (2) with

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[43] This classification throws up certain issues, including the fact that hashtags such as #breaking are used by many news organisations and so are not purely 'internal' to the GNA. However they were classed as 'internal' as they replicate terms used internally and on the wires and this was useful in identifying and explaining the cross-fertilisation of traditional practices to SNS spaces.

the occasional mention of the site that was hosting their content such as YouTube (2) and BreakingNews (1). Only 7 tweets in the Reuters week-long sample contain mentions: 4 linking to internal Reuters accounts and the remaining 3 containing 6 'external' mentions of other users' accounts – all in response to issues the user had flagged up (see Figure 31). AP rarely included an @ 'mention' in tweets (20/583) and those with mentions were more commonly to another AP account or an AP newsworker (12 'internal' mentions) whilst the remaining 8 connected to external accounts.[44]

On Facebook, embedded hyperlinks are used to 'tag' other users in a post (i.e. connect it to their profile using hypertext). This function was used sparingly by the agencies. AP didn't use this function at all, whilst AFP used it once to connect to a celebrity's Facebook page and Reuters used it to connect to other Reuters Facebook accounts in 3 posts (all to 'Special Reports', a Reuters product – see Figure 32).

'Favourites' and 'Likes'

'Favourites' are an automated Twitter function represented by a small star icon[45] on a tweet and are used to let the user who posted the tweet know that another user has taken note of it (usually expressing that they like the tweet, or have saved it for later). Reuters 'favourited' 104 tweets in the month-long sample and 19 in the week-long sample. The 'favourited' tweets came from a mix of internal and external accounts. AFP only 'favourited' 2 tweets in the month and none in the week-long sample, whilst the AP account had never used the favourite function.

Facebook users can employ the automated function/social plug-in called a 'Like' which is represented by a 'thumbs-up' symbol to show approval of a post or account and this creates a connection between their account and the item which has been 'liked'. In a similar way to the 'favourite', this function is automated and requires very limited engagement (Jones 2013: 225). AP and AFP did not use the 'Like' function at all during the sample month. AP had only ever liked 7 internal agency Facebook pages and AFP had only ever 'liked' 4 pages – 3 internal AFP pages and one external page, which was a blog for another news organisation. Reuters also did not use the 'Like' function during the sample month but had 'liked' 32 Facebook pages in total – 26 of which were internal Reuters pages and 6 of which were external accounts (see Figure 34).

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[44] Celebrities, news & entertainment companies and an independent non-profit organisation.
[45] From November 2015, this star has been replaced with a heart symbol.

Figure 27: Screenshot of informal styles of address on Twitter
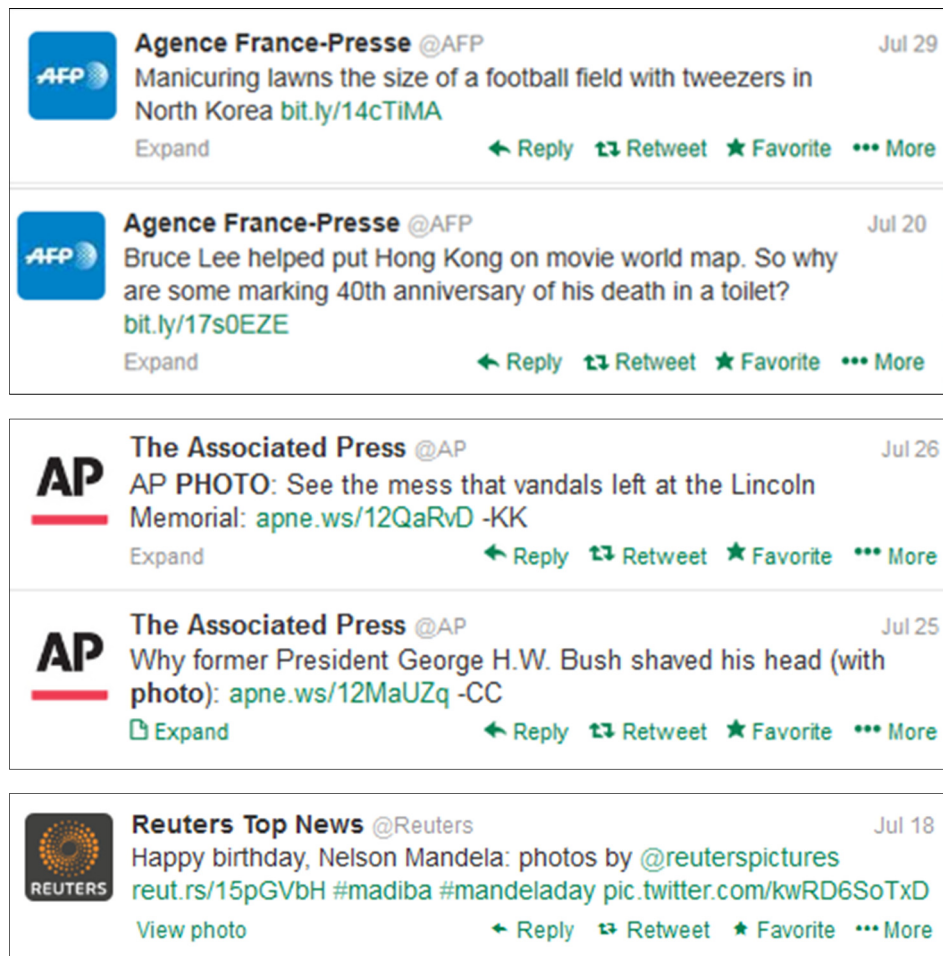
Figure 28: Screenshot of AFP Facebook post with summary text linking to an AFP video

Figure 29: Screenshot of Reuters' use of hashtag (as a slug)

Figure 30: Screenshot of AFP Facebook post including hashtags

Figure 31: Screenshot of Reuters using @ mention to internal and external accounts

Figure 32: Screenshot of Reuters tagging another Reuters account in a Facebook post

Reuters shared a link.
16 hours ago

The United Nations and the United States called for investigations into the revelations published by a Reuters Special Reports that Thai immigration officials are moving Myanmar refugees into human trafficking rings.

The report, published on Thursday and based on a two-month investigation in three countries, revealed a clandestine policy to remove Rohingya refugees from Thailand's immigration detention centers and deliver them to human traffickers waiting at sea.

U.N. calls for urgent investigation after Reuters Rohingya report
www.reuters.com

Figure 33: Screenshot showing example of Reuters 'favouriting' a tweet

Alex Fitzpatrick @AlexJamesFitz · Jul 26
Crowds are gathering in downtown Cairo. Live video via @Reuters: bit.ly /12QSqab

Hide summary   Reply   Retweet   Favorite   ••• More

World News
Reuters live coverage of events around the world. Follow @ReutersWorld on Twitter for top news and @ReutersLive for live video events.

View on web

FAVORITE
1

7:38 PM - 26 Jul 2013 · Details   Flag media

Figure 34: Screenshots of each agency's 'Likes' on Facebook
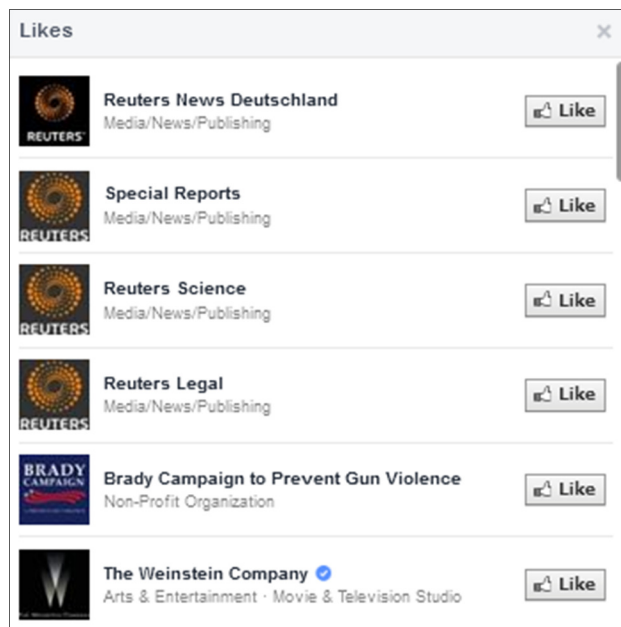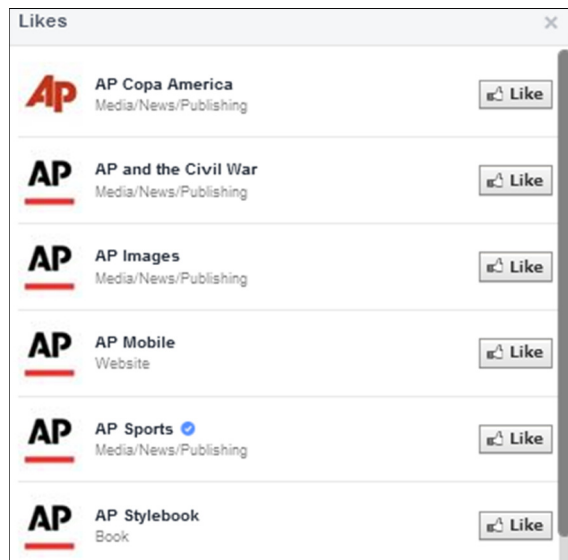
5.7.2 Theme 5 - Hybridisation of Conventions

This theme describes the merging of journalistic and SNS conventions in social media practice, terming the outcome 'hybrid conventions'. As already explained, on both Twitter and Facebook, all three agencies used practices customary to journalism as well those customary to SNSs. Interestingly, they also merged these elements to create conventions that related to both the global news agency culture of practice and the SNS culture of practice. These were *hyperlinked credits and hashtagged slugs.*

Hyperlinked credits

This hybridised convention functions in a similar way to a credit added to news content as an identifier of the author(s) but with the added feature of hyperlinking to the author's SNS account. AFP used the mention (@) most commonly to link to the Twitter account of the newsworker who authored the content. AP and Reuters also used these hyperlinked credits but irregularly (see Figure 35).

Hashtagged Slugs

As already described, slug words were commonly used to categorise content and hashtags were used to group content however the agencies also hashtagged slug words, thus allowing them to be grouped with any other posts that contain the same hashtag on the SNS. This can be seen as a merging of the two sets of conventions.

On Twitter, AFP almost always coupled their various slugs with a hashtag and Reuters always made their slug for breaking news into a '#breaking' hashtagged slug. AP meanwhile used a hashtagged slug for their 'AP Top Ten Things' service which lists what they consider to be the most interesting/important ten things to know and see each day. Of the 274 tweets in the AFP week-long sample, 118 tweets contained 143 hashtags and the majority were hashtagged slugs (95/143), for example #BREAKING and #UPDATE distinguish the nature of the content in relation to the rest of the file, #VIDEO and #PHOTO describe the media format and #AFP to credit its provenance. In the AP week-long sample, only 22/583 tweets had hashtags, 12 of these were hashtagged slugs (e.g. #APTenThings). The hashtagged slug #breaking was the only internal hashtag used by Reuters – there were 5 in the 181-tweet week-long sample (see Figure 36). AFP also used this hybrid convention extensively on Facebook, whilst AP used it once and Reuters not at all on this SNS.

Figure 35: Screenshot of use of mention function (@) as a form of credit to newsworker

Agence France-Presse @AFP — Jul 29
#BLOG For this young family, a miracle amid the tragedy of the Spanish rail disaster bit.ly/18IQCo0 via @rdecourson
Expand · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

Agence France-Presse @AFP — Jul 25
#PHOTO: Residents wade through water searching for salvageable items after fire razed a slum in Manila, by @herime23 pic.twitter.com/jsBDu7HQSg
View photo · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

Agence France-Presse @AFP — Jul 23
Full story as world gets glimpse of #RoyalBaby bit.ly/1aEMBBL by @dannyctkemp and @kjalee, **Photo:** @Carl_Court pic.twitter.com/LIDiEviXdl
View photo · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

The Associated Press @AP — Jul 23
PHOTO: Southwest plane with collapsed nose gear at LaGuardia, by @BobbyAbtahi: apne.ws/12diIse -CC
View summary · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

Reuters Top News @Reuters — Jul 22
To screen or not to screen: Cancer in Context reut.rs/119zndy by @DLSherman
View summary · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

Figure 36: Screenshot of 'hashtagged slugs' on each agency's Twitter account

Agence France-Presse @AFP — Jul 29
#BREAKING Cannes jewellery heist worth about $136 million, authorities say
Expand · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

The Associated Press @AP · Jul 22
#AP10things: **Hagel** says furloughs might continue; Another missing women case in Ohio; Lefty wins British Open: apne.ws/14vZWMN -RAS
Expand · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

Reuters Top News @Reuters · Jul 26
U.S. tells Russia it would not seek the death penalty if Edward Snowden returned to the United States: U.S. Justice Department #**breaking**
Expand · Reply · Retweet · Favorite · More

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5.8 Category 3: Interactive Activity

SNSs have been noted in journalism studies for their capacity to facilitate interaction between journalists/news organisations and users/audiences and to foster participatory practices (see Chapter 2). In contrast to this, GNA use of SNSs showed very little evidence of interaction, conversation or discussion with other users. The term interaction is defined here as the two-way (or multi-way) communication process or dialogue which transfers information between actors (McQuail 2010: 560) and involves reciprocity[46].

5.8.1 Theme 6 - Limited Interaction with Other Users

All agencies showed very little interaction with other users. As already discussed, in the week-long sample, AP 'mentioned' (@) other accounts in 20 (out of 583) tweets however none of these 'mentions' were in response to another user's activity or elicited a reply from another user and as such, did not make up part of a conversation or dialogue. Aside from these examples of connectivity, there was no evidence at all of the agency interacting with other users. This was just as pronounced on Facebook, where AP's main English-language account showed no evidence in the 25 posts of interaction with other users. On this SNS, there was not even evidence of connectivity through the use of automated functions that connect to other accounts without two-way dialogue such as 'Likes', 'Shares', 'tags' or links to other accounts.

AFP displayed a similar tendency on both SNSs. There was no evidence in the week-long or month-long sample of their main English-language Twitter account interacting with other users. None of the tweets containing mentions were in response to another user's activity or elicited a reply from another user. In the month-long analysis,

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[46] When referring to SNSs, interactivity is often used to represent particular activities that do not require any form of reciprocity and are therefore considered in this analysis to constitute communicative activity (one-way communication as defined by McQuail 2010: 552) rather than interactivity (Downes and MacMillan 2000). As such, these activities are and are discussed here in terms of connection rather than interaction and categorised as Connective and Sharing. For example, Twitter uses the term 'Interaction' to refer to all the ways one user can interrelate with another user's account, such as following them, 'favouriting' or 'retweeting' one of their tweets, using @replies to reply to their tweets, and 'mentions' of their Twitter handle to direct a tweet at them, as well as private messaging. On Facebook, users can 'tag' other users in their posts, post on other users' News Feed, add users to group messages, invite them to events, play games, send private messages, link to other accounts, or use automated social plug-ins such as the 'Like' button and 'Share' button.

one example of interaction occurred in which a user requested information about which country was depicted in a photograph that had been uploaded without explanatory information. In this instance, the photograph had already been uploaded as a 'cover photo' along with an explanation minutes prior to the request. AFP merely reposted the original attached information, with no further interaction (see Figure 37).

Reuters displayed the highest level of interaction, but this was still limited. In the week-long Twitter sample of 181 tweets, there were three tweets which displayed interaction with other users. Each of these tweets contained the @ mention function (6 mentions in total) to direct the tweet at users who had identified problems or asked questions about the content of the tweet or at other Reuters accounts (see Figure 38) as part of a conversation. There were 39 more instances of interaction in the month-long sample of 948 tweets.

A low level of interaction was also evident on Facebook. There were 2 examples of interaction with other users in the month-long sample in which the Reuters account responded to questions posed by a user related to a story posted by Reuters (see Figure 40). These responses took a rather light and positive tone.

Figure 37: Screenshot of AFP replying to a user on its Facebook account

Figure 38: Screenshot of @Reuters Twitter account replying to user

Figure 39: Screenshot of Reuters Twitter account making correction in response to user

Figure 40: Screenshots of the Reuters Facebook account replying to another user

5.9 Discussion: Social Networking the News

By analysing all three global news agencies' SNS activity, it has been possible to identify how they are using these technologies at an organisational level and how interactivity between GNAs and social media users is being shaped in this context. The analysis has identified a spectrum of activity by which GNAs are social networking the news. This spectrum incorporates largely traditional practices but also suggests the emergence of a significant set of connective and sharing practices as well as a limited amount of interactivity. Figures 41 and 42 display the results of categorisation of activity on both SNSs – as the samples were different in number of posts, the results are given as percentages to make them more easily comparable.

Figure 41: Spectrum of activity in Twitter samples
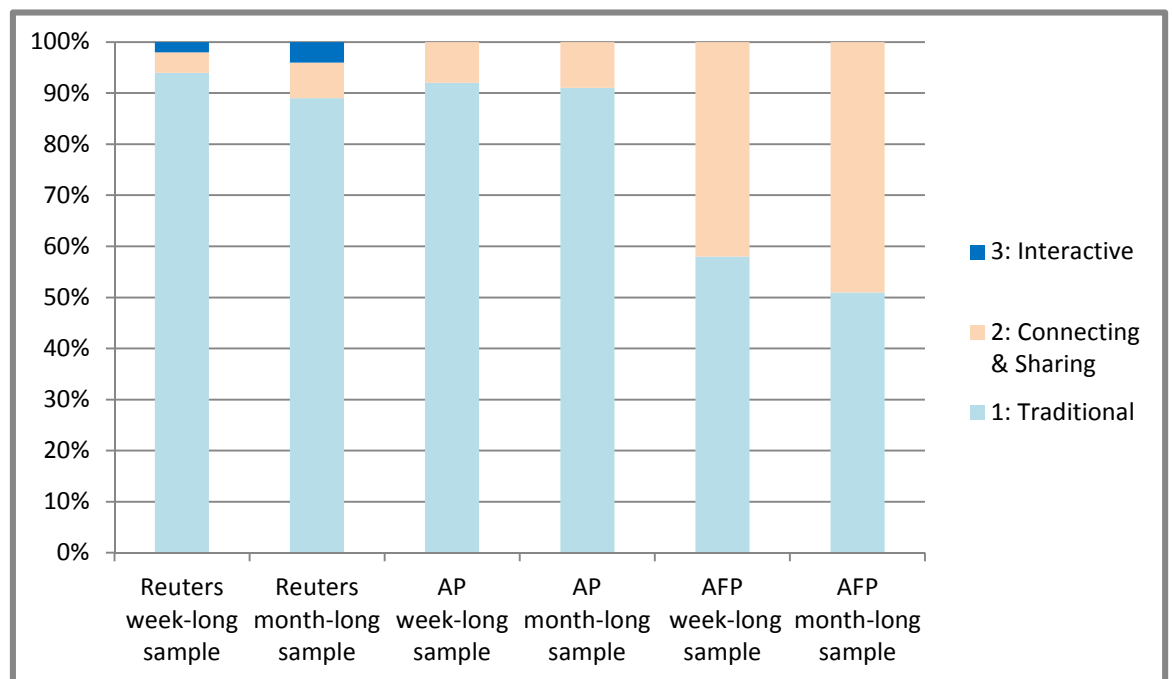
Figure 42: Spectrum of activity in Facebook samples
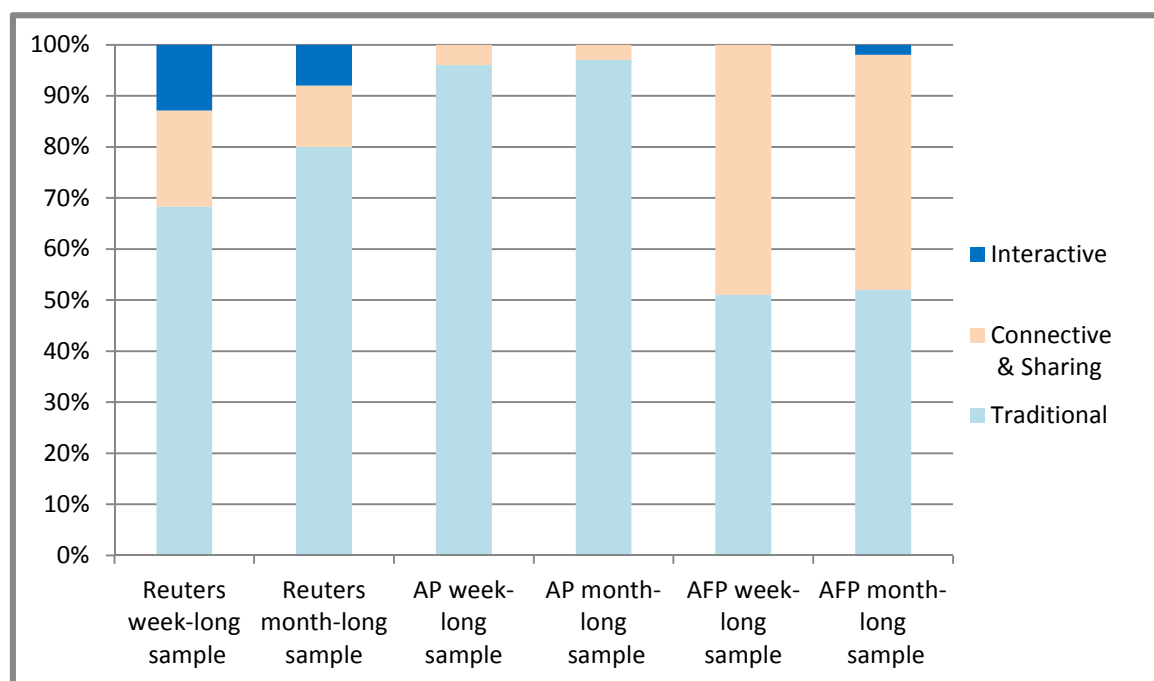
5.9.1 GNAs on SNSs: Extending and Adapting Traditional Practices

This chapter argues that through organisational SNS accounts, the agencies are barely interacting with other SNS users; they are engaging with them as a traditional *audience* in a largely formal, impersonal and non-reciprocal manner. The flow of information on SNSs is largely a one-way channel out from the organisation and the image of the agency-audience/user relationship is one characterised by the traditional mass media distribution model. This supports existing research which finds a formal approach being taken by news organisations that are transferring traditional top–down forms of communication to the social media space (Broersma and Graham 2012, Canter 2013, Hermida et al. 2011). Social network sites have been hailed as 'social/sociable' spaces, which enable and encourage interaction between users, flatten power relations and have positive implications for democratic discussion in which journalism plays a major part (Shirky 2011). However critics of this overwhelmingly positive view have found SNSs to be more 'connective' than social and has shown them to be commercial media ecologies (van Dijck 2013, Jones 2013) that extend hierarchies of influence to the social media space (Fuchs 2014). Although the functionality exists for GNAs to engage

in dialogue and conversation with social media users, and this forms a well-documented part of the culture of practice associated with social media, this affordance is not activated by GNAs in their organisational social media use. This finding is supported by other social media research, for example Fuchs found that "mutual symbolic interaction is rare in political Twitter communication and that Twitter communication mostly consists of one-way comments" (2014: 193).

Many of the conventions used by GNA accounts to compose content on social media mirror those of the existing wire service for clients however there is also evidence of the conventions of practice associated with Twitter and Facebook being used. This has led to a hybridisation of conventions. As detailed in Theme 4, traditional structures such as headlines and captions are commonly transferred to social media communication but at times the formality of address used in news content is eschewed for more diverse and informal approaches. Furthermore, though GNAs have traditionally kept self-promotion and advertisement separate from news distribution, in the social media context promotional material is mixed into the 'news feed'. The affordances of these technologies allow for this hybridisation and the agencies pick and choose which affordances are useful for them and can be made to correspond with their existing principles, ignoring or negating those that are incompatible. In this way, the GNA and SNS cultures of practice are merging to create new and different forms of GNA journalism.

5.9.2 Illuminating the GNA Network, Obscuring External Links

As Theme 1 and 2 illustrate, GNAs are hyperlinking extensively, however the links stay largely within the GNA network, connecting to their own websites, their material hosted on social media websites and in the case of AFP their material hosted on clients' websites. The restricted and internal nature of these linking practices represents a rather closed mentality towards networks on SNSs; although there are numerous visible links to internal networked relationships, there is very little evidence of GNAs' networked relationships with other actors in the news production environment. By linking to their own newsworkers, other official agency accounts, and to proprietary content hosted on their own websites and social media sites, GNAs are making their internal networks highly visible to the public (and incidentally to their own newsworkers). This is a break from past practices which kept these internal structures largely behind closed doors. It illuminates some of the internal network structure and works as a subtle form of self-

promotion as links to external actors are minimal, whilst links and reference to their own networks are constant. Holton et al. found that hyperlinks were used on SNSs not only to share but also to "seek information by soliciting reciprocal linking from other users" (2014: 33) in a form of communal activity. Though motivations for GNA linking practices were not investigated here, there is little evidence that reciprocal linking is of interest or importance to them as almost all replies to their posts, some including hyperlinks to further information, went without reply or visible engagement. The links that GNAs share are seemingly posted not to instigate discussion with them or to seek additional information from them but to promote and disseminate their proprietary news content in an already finished form. This leaves SNS users only the option of interpreting the completed package or at most highlighting errors in need of correction.

GNAs are in this way maintaining their gatekeeping role on Facebook and Twitter. Hermida suggests that social media "question the individualistic, top-down ideology of traditional journalism, subverting journalism's claim to a monopoly on the provision of everyday public knowledge" (2011a: 2) but this does not correlate with the findings of this analysis. GNAs continued to see their role on SNSs as organisations that distribute the authoritative, finished news package without seeking interactivity and conversation and without sharing the social media stage with other actors. Social media have also been found to blur the distinctions between producers and audiences but in this case these separate roles are quite clearly maintained by the agencies. There is certainly no visible shift in power of authority and gatekeeping from the agency to SNS users. With regards to agency SNS use, even Singer's claim that the role of the gatekeeper is being redefined (2006; 1997) is not strongly supported as they continue to use traditional methods of choosing what information to make available to the public.

5.9.3 Challenging the Traditional Business Model

AP and Reuters' practice of using SNS accounts to link to their own websites (and their content on social media websites) rather than to the websites of their clients directly challenges their clients for online traffic. This illustrates a discontinuity from the behind-the-scenes, wholesaler role that they have previously played and considered alongside the expansion of their websites' online offerings, indicates GNAs clearly moving toward an increased direct-to-consumer system with the aid of SNS infrastructures. Of the three agencies, AFP is the only one to distribute their social media links amongst a selection of

clients as well as their own website and social media accounts. Social networks have become increasingly important for driving traffic to news websites and research shows that they are beginning to rival search engines like Google as sources of referrals to news stories. Facebook found that on average referral traffic from Facebook to media sites had increased by over 170% throughout 2013 (Osofsky 2013). Major news websites in the US now get, on average, 9% of their traffic from Facebook according to the State of the News Media 2013 report by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (2013a; 2013b). GNA presence on Twitter and Facebook can be seen in this context as a strategy to attract their own audience and promote their brand in the social media space.

This transformation in GNA practice, though seeming to somewhat undermine the traditional business model, is confined to social media spaces and limited website services and should not be overstated in its impact on the more general GNA operating structure, which continues to function as it ever did on client subscriptions and agreements. Certain practices on social media continue to underpin the traditional model, for example the agencies do not 'scoop' their clients. Even when breaking news is published on SNSs - often alongside the 'BREAKING' slug - the information has always already been published on the wires several minutes earlier (at a minimum) for paying clients (Agence France-Presse 2011d; 2013f, Associated Press 2013b, Reuters 2013a). Global news agencies are thus deploying this new resource strategically to extend their consumer news supply whilst both maintaining and subverting their established culture of practice. They are maintaining the traditional behind-the-scenes news supplier role by never scooping clients – in this case always publishing their work on social media at a delay, after it has lost its currency of immediacy - whilst at the same time subverting it by competing for audience attention through the regular practice of linking from social media to their own websites and branded content.

5.10 Conclusion

Analysed using the cultures of practice theoretical framework, this chapter presents evidence that the introduction of social media technologies into the socio-technical news production infrastructure of GNAs has impacted their communication and news distribution practices. Though there is evidence of a rather traditional approach to activity on SNSs, it is argued that the analysis in this chapter suggests several noteworthy

changes in the GNA culture of practice, which now incorporates connective and sharing practices as well as limited interactive engagement with online audiences/SNS users. This change has been underpinned by important additions/alterations to the production process (adding social media as a distribution and communication channel) and news production practices (developing hybrid social media-specific practices) – as evidenced here. It is also underpinned by changes to the workforce structure (such as creating new units/departments and jobs related to social media, re-defining existing job roles and training newsworkers) and use of new technologies (integrating social media software such as Tweetdeck and hardware such as social media-friendly smartphones), which are further discussed in Chapter 7. Although there are a few limitations to this approach to analysing GNA social media activity (see 4.5.1 for explanation), it has provided much needed insight into emerging trends and patterns and into the manner in which GNAs use these SNSs.

The following chapter (6) analyses a new addition to organisational infrastructure - social media guidelines - using a qualitative framing approach in order to better understand how GNAs are describing and dealing with these technologies.

Chapter 6. Results of Framing Analysis of Guidelines

Competing Cultures of Practice: Professionalising Social Media

6.1 Summary

This chapter presents the findings of a qualitative framing analysis of GNA social media guidelines, which builds on Entman's understanding of framing as promoting "a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation," (Entman 1993: 52) and incorporates Verloo's conception of a policy frame (2005; 2007). It argues that GNAs are putting forward a 'competing cultures' frame to discuss social media in news production; they are framing social media as supporting a culture of practice that clashes with that of GNA journalism and competes with it for precedence amongst newsworkers. The chapter contends that GNAs are using the social media guidelines as an infrastructural tool to a) encourage newsworkers to get involved in *social networking the news* (using social media technologies and the digital and networked practices they afford to fulfil journalistic goals) and b) apply and prioritise GNA norms and values to social media practice (rather than prevailing cultural practices related to social media).

6.2 Introduction: Framing Social Media - Guidelines as Frame-building Tools

This chapter argues that GNAs are framing social media practice in news production using a 'competing cultures' frame in their guideline documents. Employing the concept of 'culture of practice', developed in Chapter 3, this frame can be interpreted as presenting social media as supporting a competing culture of practice to that of GNA journalism. As outlined in Chapter 3, GNAs can be seen to have a shared culture of practice shaped by their similar socio-technical contexts whilst social media architectures have been shown to structure users' practices and engender their own culture of practice[47].

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[47] Acknowledging that there are many different social media forms, each with different associated networked cultures and cultural practices, this analysis focuses on the shared culture of practice they can be seen to shape.

In the guidelines, these two cultures of practice are presented as clashing because they are built on fundamentally different socio-technical infrastructures, each with its own ways of functioning, which when brought together in the news production process, compete for precedence. GNAs are using the guidelines to identify the affordances of social media that present a challenge (i.e. both opportunity and risk) and to juxtapose them against established journalistic principles in order to encourage newsworkers to view social media through the global news agency cultural lens.

The chapter concludes that in creating these guidelines, GNAs are deploying resources to strategically alter core organisational infrastructure (in the form of official guidance and policy) in order to both maintain and subvert their established culture of practice through rhetorical persuasion with the aim of co-opting social media technologies into the news production process whilst maintaining control of their use and impact (as much as this is possible). By choosing to communicate with newsworkers about social media practice through the frame of competing/clashing cultures of practice, they are putting forward a unique interpretation of social media, which reflects the values, norms and beliefs that underpin GNA journalism, in particular relating to objectivity and impartiality and are suggesting that they should also underpin social media practice. Ultimately the agencies are attempting to co-opt social media (as technology) into the GNA infrastructure and subsume social media (as practice) into the GNA culture of practice and are using the guidelines as a persuasive rhetorical tool in this process.

Entman argued that "[t]o frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation," (Entman 1993: 52). This approach foregrounds the conceptualisation of frames as actively adopted and manufactured, which is useful for analysis of organisational policy documentation such as guidelines which are created with the explicit purpose of influencing the understandings and practices of employees. The approach adopted here sees frames as powerful discursive cues (D'Angelo 2002) but does not assume that all frames identified in the guidelines are deliberate and planned. It is assumed here that alongside active selection of frames by the authors of the guidelines, there are frames that are tacit and unrecognised by the authors, which make up the "conceptual scaffold" of the text (Snow and Benford 1988: 213). The social constructivist theoretical perspective from which this thesis builds understands reality to be socially constructed, i.e. made in the process of our attempts to apprehend it (Grint and Woolgar 1997). Thus the agencies' construction of a particular interpretation of social media and

of their use in the GNA context – as described in the guidelines - is viewed as significant and illustrative of their understanding of these technologies. Moreover, the mutual shaping approach to understanding technology deployed in this thesis considers technological development and social practice to be co-constructive (Boczkowski 2004b, Lievrouw and Livingstone 2006) and thus GNA framing of social media is an important mechanism in the shaping not only of newsworkers' practices but of the technology itself. The role of discourse in the construction of accepted versions of reality or 'truths' is seen to have important material and immaterial impacts, therefore analysis of the framing of the social media issue in official guidelines is central to understanding social media practice in newswork (see 4.5.2 for discussion).

Methods of frame identification differ widely. The approach adopted here builds from Entman's assertion that frames promote "problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation," (Entman 1993: 52). Guidelines are a combination of policy and instruction/advice and this type of document has a typical format related to its role in organisational management. Building from Verloo's approach to policy frame analysis, which also takes a social constructivist approach to analysing policy-related documents, this analysis begins from the assumption that guideline documents contain "an implicit or explicit representation of a diagnosis, connected to an implicit or explicit prognosis and a call for action" (Verloo 2005: 22). In this way, this chapter's analysis was guided by a set of sensitising questions: What is the problem? What are the causes? What are the solutions? Frame identification was conducted through a three stage process of examining a selection of frame-carrying elements that were drawn from previous framing studies[48] (Entman 1993, Gamson and Modigliani 1989, Tankard 2001, Verloo 2005) and developed into an analytical tool in the form of two Templates for Coding. Firstly each set of guidelines was analysed using a template of commonly used framing devices to identify patterns and themes (see Appendix 5a). This allowed for a thorough and systematic reading of the texts both independently and comparatively and provided important background data on their format, content, lexical structure, and methods of argumentation. Secondly each set of guidelines was analysed in terms of Entman's assertion that frames "diagnose, evaluate and prescribe" (1993: 52). This stage was designed to reflect the literature but was also a response to the clear 'problem-cause-

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[48] The following elements are taken from Tankard (2001: 101): headlines, subheads, images (photos, photo captions, logos, charts) and concluding statements and paragraphs. From Gamson and Modigliani, metaphors, exemplars, catch-phrases are taken and from Entman and Verloo the 'problem-cause-solution' element was adapted.

solution' pattern emerging from the guidelines during the first round of analysis as regards the formulation of discussion in the documents (see Appendix 5b). The second round of framing analysis identified for each GNA instances of:

1) Definition of the *problem(s)* (what is/are the problem(s) represented to be?)
2) Propositions about the *causes* of the problem(s), which involve *moral judgments* about the nature of the problem and its causes
3) Suggestions of *solutions* to the problem.

The final stage consisted of the systematic extrapolation of frames from the data: firstly by comparing instances of the aforementioned dimensions for each GNA individually in order to identify commonalities and themes within each set of guidelines; and secondly by comparatively analysing the data from each case in order to determine if there was a common framing of the issue, and if there was, to evidence and explicate it (see Appendix 6a). The theoretical framework of cultures of practice developed in Chapter 3 was particularly useful not only for highlighting guidelines as an important site for analysis of infrastructural change but also for interpreting the meaning of the frames found in this analysis for GNA journalism.

6.3 Global News Agency Guidelines

Policy documents, handbooks and guidelines are a central tool used by news organisations to organise journalistic practice internally, in addition for example to memos, meetings, training sessions etc., (BBC 2013b, Zelizer 2004: 28-30). GNAs, as is the case with most news organisations, create these official, written texts for their journalists to refer to when seeking news production-related information. They are constructed with the involvement of a variety of people, including managers, legal advisors and newsworkers and are updated at varying intervals (Reuters 2013a). They can be seen as an organisational mechanism used to structure journalists' practices and routines and to shape their understandings of their work and role in the agency. They form part of the infrastructure that supports newsworkers' day-to-day work and activities. This structuring process involves reference to legal and contractual rules as well as ethical and cultural guidelines, which if transgressed may lead to punishment or sanctions by the

organisation and can impact on the news product. It also involves reference to concepts, interpretations and perspectives put forward by the organisation about, for example, the nature of journalism, best practice, suitable technologies, language and terminology etc. In this way, the guidelines make reference to normative ideas of GNA journalism as well as practical and pragmatic approaches to translating these ideas into newswork.

Guidelines are only one of many structuring influences within the production environment that influence journalistic practice and as such their role in shaping practices and understandings should not be overemphasised. This said, they are one of the only written, reliable and official forms of guidance available to journalists who otherwise rely heavily on interpersonal training and learning processes that are often verbal and transient (Molla 2012a; 2012b). The use of social media for news production is a relatively new phenomenon (see Chapter 2 for discussion of this) and new guidelines have been constructed by all three GNAs on the subject. The first set of guidelines appeared in June 2009, issued by the AP (Kravets 2009) by which point agency newsworkers were already active on social media,[49] whilst Reuters added guidelines to their Handbook in March 2010 (Wright 2010) and AFP first openly published their advice in May 2011 (Agence France-Presse 2011a). Utilising guidelines can be seen as a way for the organisation to regain control over information flows by setting standards for journalists to meet and suggesting ways to use these new technologies in line with established frameworks. A published version of each agency's formal guidelines is available to the public (see Appendices 6b, 6c, 6d) and it is the most recently published guidelines[50] at the time of writing (August 2013) that are analysed in this chapter[51]. All three agencies focus largely on two main areas - newsgathering and publishing on social media, either separating sections within the document to indicate this split or constructing separate documents.

AP: AP was the first of the agencies to publish social media guidelines in 2009 and named their first social media editor on January 4, 2012, followed by a social media

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[49] Before this date there were only internal documents and rules that pertained to social media (Oliver 2008) rather than full guidelines.

[50] 'Revised guidelines published by AP on 24/07/2012; AFP's two documents published 13/10/2011 and 31/05/2011; and the two sections of the Reuters Handbook were amended and published on different dates – 16/02/2012 for the "Social Media Basic Principles" section of the "Reporting From the Internet and Using Social Media" section and 02/02/2012 for the "Picking up from Twitter and social media" section of "The Essentials of Reuters Sourcing" section.

[51] In the case of AFP, an internal document that had been circulated to AFP staff under the heading of "style guide for social media" was obtained by the researcher prior to the agency's publication of their policy and has been used to inform this part of the case study, though permission was not given for it to be included in full in the thesis' appendices.

and UGC editor (international) on October 15, 2012. The guidelines originally focused heavily on publishing and sharing information on social networks however updates have added information on sourcing and social newsgathering (see Appendix 6c). This is in line with broader trends in social media use which has evolved from largely personal communication by individuals to a more commercial arena which includes strategic organisational and professional use. The 2013 update has since brought ethical issues to the fore, adding an increased emphasis on safety for both journalists and UGC contributors in an additional separate guideline document entitled 'Social newsgathering in sensitive circumstances' (see Appendix 6c).

Reuters: Reuters' were the next to publish social media guidelines in 2010 within its Handbook, which aggregates guidelines and advice on all issues. This is in contrast to AP and AFP who have separate documents and unfortunately makes it difficult to determine the content of earlier versions as each successive update overwrites the previous one. Two sections of the Handbook are dedicated specifically to social media – one part largely focuses on using social media to publish information whilst the other focuses primarily on gathering information (see Appendix 6d). Reuters social media guidelines are located within the section of their handbook relating to 'Reporting from the Internet', which implies they are to be read in relation to preceding advice on what they term 'computer-assisted reporting'. This preceding section stresses that: "Internet reporting is nothing more than applying the principles of sound journalism to the sometimes unusual situations thrown up in the virtual world. The same standards of sourcing, identification and verification apply" (Reuters 2013a). In this analysis only the sections directly pertaining social media are analysed. Reuters hired their first social media editor in July 2011 (Romenesko 2011) and added a deputy editor in January 2012, both of whom by the time of writing (August 2013) had left the role (and not yet been replaced).

AFP: AFP publicly published their first set of social media guidelines on 31st May 2011 and has updated them twice since then (13.10.2011 and 17.07.2013)[52]. AFP have

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[52] Prior to this the agency states that the guidelines were circulated within the agency but not made public. I obtained a copy of an earlier version - which was referred to as a memo - containing social media guidance but which is almost identical to the 'Guidelines for the use of content from social media' in… It contained an extra section with a template for obtaining permission (without payment) and explaining that when the source of an image can be found, the agency must obtain permission to publish the image (- it does not explain what the protocol

two separate guideline documents regarding social media: 'Guidelines for using social media', which is about using social media in general, managing accounts and publishing on social media and has been updated twice since it was initially circulated (Agence France-Presse 2013f); and 'Guidelines on the use of content from social networks', which is about newsgathering/taking content from social media, focuses on "the proper usage of material posted on the networks" and was last updated in May 2011 (Agence France-Presse 2011d). The latter is largely concerned with what this thesis terms user-generated content. Within this document, guidance is split into two sections according to the type of 'platform' to which it relates – 'text' and 'video and photo': in this way, the guidelines are referring to written UGC and visual UGC (there is no guidance on audio material).

6.3.1 Structuring the Unstructured

The relationship between guidelines and practice is complex and cannot be explained in terms of cause and effect. A social constructivist perspective highlights that official regulation and guidance about technologies work to shape journalists' understandings and uses of those technologies by framing them in particular ways but that journalists' processes of interpretation are also shaped by other factors and journalists are themselves influential in shaping the guidelines and the technologies to which they refer. In this thesis, the guidelines are viewed as one of many factors that shape understanding and use of social media but it is argued that analysis of them can elucidate key organisational understandings and preferred uses of social media as well as illustrate how social media relates to established and evolving cultural frameworks for news production in GNAs. Whilst this chapter focuses on the guidelines as a key shaping factor, the interview data in Chapter 7 sheds light on newsworkers' explanations of other influencing factors and the variety of interpretations they have of social media and Chapter 5 illustrates actual organisational practices on social media which are omitted from the guidelines. When considered together, these complementary analyses help to illuminate how current journalistic social media practices are taking shape.

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is if the source cannot be found). It adds that the author may terminate the licence at will since it has been granted without payment and that if the licence is terminated, the agency must take down the images and make the same request of clients.

The guidelines describe official policy and what the agencies consider to be 'best practice', however they are open to change and are evolving[53] as Reuters and AFP explain: "This is a fast-changing world… The issues around what we can and cannot say there are a subject of constant conversation among us, so as this is not our first word on the subject, it will not be the last" (Appendix 6b). AFP note that: "The agency's presence on social networks and the application of these guidelines will be reviewed and updated each year in the agency's annual report" and that the guidelines "will be regularly updated to keep abreast of evolving trends on the Internet." An AP news manager also explained this during interview:

> Respondent: I can tell you the reason why it has changed quite a lot is because things are moving very fast and they need to remain up-to-date. It's like you doing research, like a year and a half ago, that stuff has all gone so instead of renewing the guidelines every year that's just too slow. It needs to be done much more regularly in order to reflect, because even tech… not just even techniques, and the way of thinking starts to shift, some social networks have gone down, some have started up.
> *Researcher: So it's a dynamic environment?*
> Respondent: Yeah because in order to get the most out of it we need to be using the nearest tools or the tools that people are using the most. So in order for us to be able to do that, the guidelines have to help people know how to use them and navigate them. *(Interview 20)*

Unstable as they are, the guidelines can also provide insight into the ways in which journalistic practice is shaped by the organisational values and norms of the agency, and can serve as an indication of the processes, routines and practices that take place. The advice provided in the guidelines is premised on implicit understandings and assumptions about what social media are and what news agency journalism is and should be, as well as about the opportunities and risks arising from the use of social media in news production and about acceptable ways to deal with this. It is these assumptions that this framing analysis is designed to uncover and interrogate.

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[53] The most recent updates to social media guidelines have added information about security and password protection (Agence France-Presse 2013a; AP 2013b; 2013c) reflecting a growing concern with the hacking and hijacking of accounts and with the ethical implications of sourcing material from users in dangerous circumstances.

Analysed in this thesis alongside and in relation to organisational activity on social network sites, and interview and observation data, the guidelines are instrumental in understanding the tension between old and new, and how it is being dealt with; how existing practice is changing to incorporate these new technologies; if and how existing values and norms are changing in relation to social media technologies; and of what the emerging socio-technical infrastructure of news production consists. The following section reports the findings of a framing analysis of GNA social media guidelines (see 4.5.2 for discussion of this method).

6.4 The 'Social Media Problem'

Through examination of the guidelines using a three-stage qualitative framing analysis, a common framing of the social media issue by all three GNAs was identified. Although the agencies take slightly different approaches to advising their newsworkers, the overall framing of the role of social media in professional practice is very similar. The central finding is that all three agencies are using an overarching 'competing cultures' frame, constructed through the presentation of social media as a conflicting and competing culture of practice to that of global news agency journalism. This frame is constructed through the persistent presentation of the following argument throughout the guidelines:

1) **Problem:** Social media present opportunities to improve GNA journalism and are now a necessity for news production in a 'network society' but their use poses risks and threatens to disrupt the status quo.

2) **Cause(s):** The architecture of social media afford cultural practices which stand in contradiction to the GNA culture of practice, thus threatening to disrupt or compromise it.

3) **Solution:** Newsworkers' understanding and use of social media must be brought within the bounds of the accepted and established journalistic norms and values of the GNA culture.

It is argued that the guidelines illustrate GNAs attempting to control the criteria by which journalistic social media practice is evaluated - deciding what is and what is not 'professionally acceptable'. Before describing and explaining how the agencies framed social media, it must first be pointed out that the guidelines avoid giving a clear definition of what exactly social media are. Entman notes that frames are "defined by what they omit as well as include" (1993: 54) so it is important to note that none of the guidelines provide a coherent definition of what they consider social media to be and they use a variety of terms, interchangeably, to refer to them, including most commonly social network/social media/social networking site. As a result, their definition of social media is not explicit – it is implicit and takes place through use of a small selection of terms, topics, concepts and arguments, in particular with reference to a selection of the perceived functions and affordances social media technologies (explained in the following discussion). Though the guidelines recognise that there are numerous social media, Twitter and Facebook loom large: the most commonly named social media site across all the guidelines is Twitter, followed by Facebook[54]. Most examples of practice cited in the guidelines refer to these two SNSs and considerable attention has been paid to giving instructions and advice on their particular functions, e.g. tweeting, retweeting, posting, 'Liking' etc. Even discussions not limited to giving advice on these particular SNSs apply terms related to Twitter- and Facebook-specific functions. This contributes to an overarching framing of social media as SNSs (even though these are only one of several genres) and means that those functions, actions, and issues that are connected to the use of Twitter and Facebook become the focus of the documents. The following discussion explains the component parts or 'dimensions' of the 'competing cultures' frame in detail.

6.5 Defining the Problem: Social Media as Opportunity and Risk

Social media present opportunities to improve GNA journalism and are now a necessity for news production in a 'network society' but their use poses risks and threatens to disrupt the status quo.

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[54] Reuters additionally mention LinkedIn once, AP mentions Google Plus three times and AFP briefly mentions 10 other forms of social media in their discussion.

It is this principal problem that GNAs argue has necessitated the creation of the guidelines. The 'social media problem' is in this way based on a set of complex assumptions about a) what social media are, the opportunities for action they afford and culture of practice they engender and b) what GNA journalism is, the socio-technical infrastructure it is built on and culture of practice this supports. Underpinning this problem is the judgment that social media are simultaneously an *opportunity* that can't be missed and a *risk* that must be mitigated and this opportunity-risk dynamic is pervasive throughout the guidelines. Framed as a new 'tool' in the arsenal of journalism practice, GNA guidelines suggest that social media provide the opportunity to aid in the process of news production - but only if mastered in a certain way. This characterisation of social media as 'tool' implies that they should be viewed as an instrument in the service of journalism and suggests that there is a skill to using them. The guidelines suggest that risk comes with misappropriating the tool – a situation which in this context occurs as a result of failing to view social media through the lens of professional journalism – i.e. failure to consider this new tool in relation to established ethical and cultural frameworks of GNA news production.

The agencies assess social media to be important and increasingly essential for them – an *opportunity* to stay up-to-date and improve their journalism. This is made clear by their descriptions of social media as 'vital', 'necessary' and 'essential'. For example, AFP recognise the social relevance of social media, describing them as "a primary source of information and an integral part of daily life for billions of people the world over" and couple this with the assertion that for journalists "active participation in social media has become a vital tool". Reuters highlight social media use by important institutions, explaining how "Governments and other institutions are increasingly using Twitter, Facebook and other social networking sites to get official information and news out to journalists and the general public" and arguing that as a result "it might be necessary to "like," "join" or adopt a "badge" to get the news". AP state that they have "become an essential tool for AP reporters to gather news and share links to our published work" and add that "Using social media to hunt down tips, witnesses and user-generated content is an essential tool in the modern reporting arsenal, and AP journalists have had a lot of success with it in recent years."

It is made explicit that failure to engage with social media and exploit this opportunity puts the agency at risk of 'missing out' on valuable information. AFP exemplifies this, saying:

Reporters should build up a network on Twitter and Facebook of trusted accounts relevant to their beat, whether politicians, personalities, contacts or the competition. Otherwise, we risk missing important statements and news alerts. (Appendix 6b)

The picture painted here is that of GNAs *responding* to an outside influence and *reacting* to a technological and social change. They highlight how social media are an increasingly important online space that the public, subjects of news stories and newsmakers are already using, which cannot now be dismissed as irrelevant to news work (as they had previously been).

These opportunities are juxtaposed against the numerous risks social media are seen to present to the established culture of practice and the existing infrastructure at GNAs – which leads to the 'social media problem'. AFP highlight that "social networks pose new challenges for agency journalists because they allow us to interact directly with the public without the filter of an editor or a client." This comment highlights that risks arise from the 'unmediated' forms of organisation/newsworker-public communication this environment enables, which as Chapter 2 explains, is in many ways novel for news agencies as it moves them away from their business-to-business retail structure and brings them 'out of the factory and onto the shop floor'.

The main risk that these direct forms of interaction and communication poses is framed as harm to the agency reputation and brand – two distinct but interlinked concepts that are the abstract constructions on which the agency business model rests. AFP notes that use of material from social networks "carries significant risks to the agency's reputation for reliability and accuracy, notwithstanding any legal issues". Reuters explain that they want to make newsworkers "fully aware of the risks -- especially those that threaten our hard-earned reputation for independence and freedom from bias or our brand." AP also reminds newsworkers that "AP staffers must be aware that opinions they express may damage the AP's reputation as an unbiased source of news." The concept of brand is presented in these comments as underpinned by reputation, which in the agencies' case is built on adherence to the core journalistic values of freedom from bias, independence, reliability, and accuracy. Social media enable individual newsworkers to communicate and interact in an online public space in which their communications are unedited, persistent and searchable. In this public social media space, there is no clear delineation between newsworkers' personal communications and professional communication as a journalist. Newsworkers are considered representatives of the agency

at all times and their conduct is judged in line with agency standards but the social media environments in which they increasingly operate were not designed as journalistic (or professional) spaces but primarily for 'personal' use. Newsworkers' presence in these spaces thus blurs the previously distinct boundaries of the organisation and its brand as they display myriad personal interpretations, opinions, approaches to news storytelling etc., which may not fit comfortably within the agencies' public facing brand. In this way, social media are presented as fundamentally extrinsic spaces, which encourage cultural practices that are not in line with the agencies' trademark professional journalism.

Importantly, the guidelines suggest that it is *the way they are used* by newsworkers rather than the technologies themselves that poses the 'social media problem'. This makes newsworkers' interpretation and understanding of social media crucial to the continued adherence to agency principles. The creation of the guidelines is framed as addressing this problem by enabling newsworkers the opportunity to improve or advance the news agency's brand and reputation (as well as their own) whilst mitigating damage to them. AP explain this, saying: "The Social Media Guidelines are designed to advance the AP's brand and staffers' personal brands on social networks," and AFP propose that:

> The presence of AFP journalists on social networks helps build the agency's credibility across the Internet and shows that AFP has a solid presence across the spectrum of digital and traditional media… AFP journalists are encouraged to be part of this process and to be active on social media, using the networks in a measured and credible way in keeping with the agency's strong and historical journalistic traditions. (Appendix 6b)

The overall framing of the problem is therefore socio-technical – social media technologies afford certain actions but it is newsworkers' interpretations of those affordances which shape their practices and subsequently whether their use of social media presents opportunities or risks to the agency. In order to more fully understand the agencies' approach to framing social media, the following section analyses what the guidelines propose is causing the 'social media problem'.

6.6 Judging Causes: Competing Cultures of Practice

The architecture of social media afford cultural practices which stand in contradiction to the GNA culture of practice, thus threatening to disrupt or compromise it.

Social media are framed as extrinsic to journalism, with their own associated artefacts, practices and social arrangements that are different to those of journalism and challenge established journalistic conventions. After asserting the 'problem' (i.e. that social media are now necessary 'tools' to be used in the accomplishment of journalistic tasks but that they pose risks which must be managed), the guidelines move on to setting out the terms of the debate. They do this by strategically talking through the affordances of social media in relation to the journalistic context. The guidelines explain a) which elements of the architecture of social media pose risks and which of the affordances that these architectures support should not be operationalised by newsworkers and b) which elements of the architecture should be seen to present opportunities, which affordances should be operationalised by newsworkers and how this should be achieved. In this discussion, there is the implicit assumption that social media stand in contradiction to journalism (at least in some ways); that social media practice and journalism practice are premised on different and potentially contrasting values, norms and practices – or in other terms, on different cultures of practice.

The guidelines clearly pit particular characteristics and affordances associated with social media against those of global news agency journalism. For example, Reuters' guidelines do this explicitly by stating:

> The tension is clear: Social networks encourage fast, constant, brief communications; journalism calls for communication preceded by fact-finding and thoughtful consideration. Journalism has many "unsend" buttons, including editors. Social networks have none. (Appendix 6d)

This assessment is based on the judgment that cultures of practice related to social media are not conducive to professional journalism practice and gives examples related to the speed, frequency, length/depth and of communication as well as the role of peer review in the process. It also assumes that the existing global news agency culture of

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practice adequately ensures that the organisation's journalistic role is performed effectively and is not in need of change.

The majority of space in each set of guidelines is dedicated to focusing on judging what causes the 'opportunity-risk' problem and proposing how best to respond. Here all the agencies highlight the architecture and affordances of social media as *challenges* - framed as such because the practices they afford simultaneously present opportunities and risks to the news agency. To explain this, the guidelines highlight certain elements of the architecture of social media and what they afford in terms of social practice, making a judgment as to the implications of these affordances for news production. Newsworkers' participation in the cultures of practice engendered by the affordances of social network sites (note here the focus not on social media more broadly but almost exclusively on SNSs) is portrayed as the *cause* of the overarching 'social media' problem. This is achieved through presenting the affordances as contradictory to global news agency journalism's norms and values and as a threat to the established global news agency culture of practice.

6.7 Competing Codes: SNS Architecture & Affordances vs GNA Principles & Practice

Many of the defining affordances of social media are presented as *challenges,* for example the persistence (recording and archiving), replicability (duplication/manipulation), scalability (potential visibility) and searchability (location and access through search) of data created on or transmitted through them. These are discussed in relation to – and often in opposition to - the tenets and core principles of news agency journalism, which are framed as being immutable, 'tried and tested', and not in need of change. The guidelines suggest that social media's affordances alone do not cause a problem, rather it is how newsworkers perceive and respond to them that can be problematic. That social networks afford the storing, sharing, duplication, manipulation and mass publication of data presents a challenge (to extract opportunities and mitigate risks) but it is suggested that problems arise when newsworkers use SNSs for forms of interaction and communication that are inconsistent with news agency values. Journalism here is presented as the 'constant' factor to which any innovation must adapt. It is never suggested that elements of news agency culture, premised on existing

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norms, values, principles and standards, should alter – only that certain practices must be introduced to ensure the continued adherence to this established culture whilst using social media.

6.7.1 The Challenge of Digitally-Networked and Web-Based Architectures

A fundamental and defining characteristic of social media is that the software that underpins them is built on the Internet, thus they are 'online' services with a web-based, digitally-networked architecture. This is dealt with in a very broad way in the guidelines, whereby the "openness" of the internet is seen to clash with the existing "closed" professional context, which relies on control over content and practice. In explaining the role of social media environments, the guidelines can be seen to be making indirect references to the persistence, replicability, scalability and searchability of online expressions through networked media that boyd has identified (see Chapter 3 and boyd 2010). The guidelines present these affordances largely as risks to the news agency culture[55] by explaining that they can be overlooked or 'misinterpreted' by newsworkers which may lead to practice judged inappropriate by the agencies.

For example, the recording and archiving of activity within social media spaces and subsequent availability of data across broader networks and to search engines make traces of action and interaction in these spaces *persistent* and *searchable*. Networked technology has made recording and publicly displaying/publishing online action and interaction common practice. AFP urge newsworkers to "bear in mind that your words will be public and will be archived and referenced by search engines", whilst Reuters state that they are "virtual venues" in which "we are flying without a net", reminding newsworkers that in this environment "an indiscretion lasts forever".

Replicability of digital content and particularly images is identified as the cause of numerous issues because on social media data can be easily duplicated and manipulated. With regards to newsgathering, this makes it difficult to find the original instance of UGC in order to locate and contact the author who can provide consent to the rights for the content, contextualise it and guarantee its authenticity – all necessary in the news agency culture of practice. AFP warn newsworkers about this, stating that "because

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[55] Replicability appears to be considered most negatively and linked with risks/negative implications whilst searchability is viewed more positively and only linked with a risk in that mistakes can be easily searched for and found.

of the openness of the internet, use of this material [UGC] carries significant risks to the agency's reputation for reliability and accuracy". Analysing in more depth what is meant by "the openness of the Internet" in this context, AFP are referring to the ability for any user to post any material in any format with no guarantee that the content is what it purports to be or that the user is who he/she purports to be. News agencies have over many years developed efficient ways of dealing with sources and source material but social networks have thrown up unprecedented difficulties for verifying the authenticity of material and sources, acquiring rights to use material, and providing context to material, which are fundamental practices for their work. However the anonymity afforded by digital representations of self in social media spaces provides the opportunity for identity play as well as deception, which present issues for verification, accuracy, reliability and trust in newsgathering. A vivid example of when this has caused problems is issued by AFP:

> We have been caught out in the past, for example by a fake Twitter
> account in which the British foreign secretary supposedly sent a message
> of condolence after the death of Michael Jackson ending with the words:
> "RIP, Michael." (Appendix 6b)

Emphasising the potential issues with what this architecture affords for communicating and interacting with other users, AP explain that "as multitudes of people have learned all too well, virtually nothing is truly private on the Internet". *Replicability* also makes the de-contextualisation and re-contextualisation of content relatively easy and means that private communication can be made public whilst the potential for content to be seen by many – its *scalability* – is great. AFP also flag up this risk, stating: "All information posted online – whether on Twitter, Facebook or any other social network – is or can easily become public, even if it originates from a personal account," Emphasising this - even if the communicative act the data represents was originally intended to be private - AP warn: "Any response we make to a reader or viewer could go public. Email, Facebook messages and Twitter direct messages may feel like private communications, but may easily find their way to blogs and political pressure groups, attorneys and others." AP also recognise that despite the ability to delete posts, the data may have already been duplicated and shared therefore it will still be publicly visible elsewhere, explaining that "Tweets of ours that have been retweeted or reposted elsewhere will still remain publicly visible."

The benefits that these affordances offer for news production are largely implied and only briefly discussed whilst the risks are emphasised. For example, *persistence* and *searchability* of archived data also allows for monitoring and seeking newsworthy information and new sources. Reuters explain how social media have "given us new ways to report -- finding stories and tipsters on Twitter, using LinkedIn to locate sources, mining Facebook groups for angles and insights, and so on." AFP also recognise this, recounting an example of when these affordances were operationalised:

> For example when French broker Jerome Kerviel was accused of a five-billion-euro trading scandal at Societe Generale, we were able to see co-workers he had listed on his Facebook site, and then to contact them for comment through a search in the White Pages. (Appendix 6b)

Scalability means that the visibility of other users' content and information can be greatly increased when compared with other media, allowing newsworkers to build up contacts and identify relevant material. This material is publicly accessible, archived and easily found through search. AFP give an example of how this can be useful: "For example when Egyptian opposition figure Mohamed ElBaradei returned home on January 27 we used his brother as a direct source but we also used a message ElBaradei himself posted on Twitter." *Scalability* also affords the widespread distribution and visibility of agency content across heterogeneous networks, which may include people that may otherwise not have been reached and this benefit is alluded to in the guidelines' encouragement of newsworkers to publish and promote proprietary material on social media. AFP state: "By building up networks on Twitter, AFP journalists not only develop useful sources of information, they also help to gain visibility for AFP's journalism across the Internet."

This discussion in the guidelines represents a formalised outcome of the negotiation between two cultures of practice, each of which prioritises different principles and values. As outlined in the theoretical framework (Chapter 3), building on the basic characteristics of digitally-networked online spaces, social media architectures structure the environment in a way that shapes the possible actions and interactions within them, which can engender common cultural practices. Through integration of social media into the news agency socio-technical infrastructure, these social media practices are coming up against established professional culture, causing tension and disruption. Of particular prominence in the guidelines is the impact of collapsed contexts (the lack of spatial,

social, and temporal boundaries which make it difficult to maintain distinct social contexts) and blurring of public and private which become difficult to maintain as distinct.

6.7.2 Collapsed Contexts and Blurred Boundaries

The guidelines go on to identify how in this online environment, social networks afford both private and public communication, as well as personal and professional communication, characterising these dual possibilities as posing a risk to news agency professionalism. Attention to this topic is illustrative of the agencies' recognition of the way SNSs can collapse contexts (Marwick and boyd 2010). Separation of contexts is not designed into the technologies, which instead collapse boundaries, for example combining the personal and professional.

Having to simultaneously present themselves in a professional capacity as news agency newsworkers and in an individual capacity as people with personal opinions, likes and dislikes, political, religious, cultural beliefs etc., to different groups in the same SNS space presents a challenge. It is clear in the guidelines that SNSs are being considered in their capacity as a tool for journalism and that this depiction overrides their use as a personal technology. AFP explains that from the perspective of 'personal' use, "Journalists should understand they are responsible for the information on their Facebook page or Twitter account, and can be held legally accountable for any issues arising from that information" whilst adding that "If information is posted while the journalist is carrying out official AFP business, AFP could also face legal ramifications." AP remind newsworkers that "any opinions or personal information they disclose about themselves or colleagues may be linked to the AP's name. That's true even if staffers restrict their pages to viewing only by friends." Reuters emphasise that the organisation's ethical commitment to being "responsible, fair and impartial" applies "24 hours a day" and extends beyond writing for the agency's file to activity online. In this way the practices and modes of expression commonly associated with social media such as widespread "sharing" of information and content, expression of personal identity/ies, and openness of opinion are moderated by the agencies to fit their purposes and meet their expectations of newsworkers.

With advice sections such as AFP's 'MANAGING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA IDENTITY' and AP's guidance under titles of 'ACCOUNTS' and 'OPINION', the guidelines suggest that newsworkers' presentation of self is of prime concern to the

agencies. This involves more than the requirement to publicly display affiliation with the agency. Connections, links and interactions with other users also reflect the multi-faceted identities of newsworkers and form part of their public profile. Ellison and boyd describe how basic user profiles (made up of personal information) have increasingly taken a backseat to profile updates, which illustrates a shift to representing "an individual as an expression of action, a node in a series of groups, and a repository of self- and other-provided data" (2013: 154). Reuters note this lack of control over other users' actions in the social media space, writing: "… obviously, we cannot control what others may post on our accounts" and propose no response to this, accepting it as part of the social media culture of practice. In this context of collaborative creation of SNS identity where aggregated data about a user's actions, interactions and location in networks contribute to the presentation of their public identity, the restrictive and often automated nature of interaction on SNSs is recognised as an important issue for professional newsworkers.

6.7.3 Automated Interaction and Social Media Protocol

The way that conventions of social media practice are framed as threatening news agency cultures of practice is clear in discussions of automated functions. The AP highlights how automated actions on social networks such as 'friending' or 'liking' can cause problems because they can be interpreted differently when considered in relation to journalism. AP state: ""friending and "liking" political candidates or causes may create a perception among people unfamiliar with the protocol of social networks that AP staffers are advocates." The assumption here is that social networks have their own 'protocol' that makes them different from other communication platforms, and the judgment is made that even if elements of SNS protocol do not technically present a problem for newsworkers (i.e. 'friending' and 'liking' are in these contexts primarily seen as ways to forge links with other users, not necessarily to signal approval) they can be interpreted differently and thus are problematic.

The inherently social framing of SNS through interface design language encourages users to "friend" and "follow", to "Like" and share (Jones 2013) but this social framing comes up against the professionalism associated with journalism. It is considered appropriate by the agencies for newsworkers to maintain a professional connection with newsmakers, sources, witnesses etc., as they have done in the past through other means but it is made clear that this connection should not be overly personal and in performing

this relationship, newsworkers should not express support, criticism or personal opinions about the contact or about related issues. Maintaining this professional distance is compromised by social media architectures which restrict the terms of association to automated connections. Reuters explain this problem by arguing that; "On the one hand, these standards can be compromised whenever we "like" a post or adopt a "badge" or "join" a cause, particularly when the subject is relevant or even tangential to our beat. On the other hand, it might be necessary to "like," "join" or adopt a "badge" to get the news." This emphasises how relationships, connections and interactions played out on SNSs are mediated by them and may not be an accurate representation of the relationship between journalists and other users. In this way, the architecture of social networks is seen to shape how newsworkers can express themselves in these spaces, enabling and constraining them at the same time. The design language used to represent affordances in this context implies relational dynamics that are incompatible with the impartiality and objectivity demanded by the global news agency culture of practice.

In a further example of how and automated functions are seen as causing the agencies problems, AP advise on how to approach the retweet function when using Twitter in a way that ensures that personal opinion is mitigated from the interaction as per journalism's norms of impartiality and objectivity:

> Retweets, like tweets, should not be written in a way that looks like you're expressing a personal opinion on the issues of the day. A retweet with no comment of your own can easily be seen as a sign of approval of what you're relaying… However, we can judiciously retweet opinionated material if we make clear we're simply reporting it, much as we would quote it in a story. (Appendix 6c)

AFP recognise the centrality of forms of automated interaction but explain how they should be amended to fit in with news agency values, advising that: "recommending or re-tweeting links is an essential part of the social network experience and is encouraged. However, it is important this process is done with care. A retweet or link is often considered a sympathetic recommendation." There is a similar level of concern with the publicly visible nature of connections with other users on SNSs.

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6.7.4 Public Displays of Connection

Advice on "Friending" and "Following" shows how the public displays of connection that Donath and boyd argue are central to SNSs are identified as a potential problem by the agencies because links and connections between newsworkers and other users are visible beyond the organisational network and on a potentially large scale, which opens them to scrutiny and interpretation. The "publicly visible, personally curated list of contacts" that SNSs have made a mainstream practice (Ellison & boyd 2013: 155) as well as the visualisation of interaction between connections across the site are framed as causes of incompatibility with journalism practice. This can be seen in Reuters' warning to newsworkers that: "We should also remember that by friending or following someone, we may be giving out the identity of a source. Everything depends on our keeping trust." The guidelines here are juxtaposing SNSs' public displays of connection with news agency journalism's requirement to keep confidentiality with their sources and to ensure that their practices don't put sources in compromising positions.

Connecting (Friending/Following etc.,) with a selected group of users creates traceable networks of connection. AP indicate problems that can arise from newsworkers' lack of recognition of the way information flows through these networks in their warning about "trash-talking" where they state: "The person or organization you're deriding may be one that an AP colleague is trying to develop as a source."

Social network sites market themselves as informal places to connect with friends, for example Twitter urges users to: "Find out what's happening, right now, with the people and organizations you care about" (Twitter 2013). AFP highlight the informal, conversational forms of communication that are characteristic of social networks, presenting them as in contrast to newsworkers' obligation to be professional stating: "Jokes (LOL) and the free and easy language which characterize the networks should not cause us to forget basic rules." Here, the shared cultural practices associated with social media are shown to be incompatible with the professional culture of practice.

Affordances are thus conceptualised not simply as causes of the problem but as challenges to be met because they present both *opportunity* (to improve news agency journalism) and *risk* (of harm to news agency journalism) – in order to successfully exploit the opportunities they offer, newsworkers must work within the constraints of the global news agency culture so as to mitigate the risks they pose to it. Therefore the solutions that are offered in the guidelines are presented as strategies to deal with these

challenges, which if applied cumulatively, will address the overall 'social media problem'. Thus the range of 'cures' respond to this 'diagnosis'.

6.8 Proffering Solutions: Co-opting Social Media

Newsworkers' understanding and use of social media must be brought within the bounds of the accepted and established journalistic norms and values of the GNA culture.

In response to the overarching 'social media problem', the first solution of note is the guidelines themselves. They are an organisational response to a technology which was created externally for non-journalistic purposes but which has become a part of the socio-technical infrastructure of global news agencies through grassroots adoption by journalists and later by strategic organisational moves toward co-opting the technology for news production. The guidelines are a new addition to the informational infrastructure, which take the form of advice to ensure that newsworkers maximise the opportunities that social media afford and minimise the risks that they pose. The role that they serve is to ensure that the global news agency culture of practice dominates over the social media culture of practice by proposing a strategy to co-opt the technology into the agency infrastructure and promote practices which ensure that established rules, regulations, norms and values are not transgressed. Their addition to the catalogue of guidelines is an important example of the agencies deliberately changing an element their socio-technical infrastructure for news production in order to integrate social media.

The solution that the guidelines offer to the social media problem is the creation and adoption of a set of practices that adapt social media practice to fit (comfortably or not) into global news agency culture of practice. The guidelines offer practical strategies for navigating social media architecture, managing the aforementioned affordances and mitigating the risks they pose, but they also offer a conceptual lens through which newsworkers are encouraged to view social media. Perceived causes of the social media problem are addressed with responses that stem from news agency journalism's code of practice. The solution to the problem is thus drawn from a different register to the problem – the 'technical' issues presented by social media are solved with 'social/cultural' solutions.

6.8.1 Encouraging Use with Caveats

All three agencies explicitly encourage the use of social media. Reuters state: "We want to encourage you to use social media approaches in your journalism… Our wish is for people to benefit safely from social networks… By all means, explore ways in which social media can help you do your job." AFP explain: "The management strongly encourages AFP journalists to open accounts with popular social networking sites… Reporters and editors should monitor Twitter, Facebook, etc., just as they do other sites," whilst AP state: They (the guidelines) encourage staffers to be active participants in social networks… All AP journalists are encouraged to have accounts on social networks." In this vein, the guidelines all state that the aim of the agency is to encourage social media use whilst protecting news agency values, reputation and brand. Beyond 'use' of social media, they also encourage 'engagement' and interaction with other users. For example, AP profess to be "strongly in favor of engaging with those who consume our content." However, the guidelines temper this broad encouragement with disclaimers and caveats which they propose will solve the problems that arise with social media use.

6.8.2 Providing Examples and Promoting Preferred Practice

A basic solution that the guidelines provide is the description of preferred instances of how social media have been and are being used for newswork and promotion of what the agencies deem 'best practice'. The guidelines clearly confirm that global news agencies are using social media technologies in their news production process, giving examples and explaining broadly that they are using them for 1) newsgathering, 2) news distribution, and 3) interacting with other social media users. They also suggest that UGC is central to the role of social media in their production process, with elaborated sections of the guidelines devoted to discussing this type of material: 'Picking up from Twitter and social media' for Reuters; 'Guidelines on the use of content from social networks' for AFP; and 'Sourcing' and 'Social newsgathering in sensitive circumstances' for AP.

They suggest however that they are not highly rated as a tool or source of information and are often seen as a last resort, for use when no professional coverage is possible or available. Reuters explain that: "In many cases, information initially coming to our attention via Twitter will serve simply as a tip, allowing us to check out and report

the information ourselves in the regular way, quoting more solid sources." This implies social media practice should be supplemented with more traditional reporting practices and that the newsworthiness of any material obtained via social media must outweigh the risks. Reuters explain that "Each decision to use material from Twitter or similar sites is a calculated risk, pitting newsworthiness against potential reputational harm." AFP note that social media can be useful for "otherwise unobtainable photographs and videos", illustrating that it is primarily these forms of content which cannot be gained from professional journalists that are considered newsworthy enough for inclusion. They state:

> We may on occasion use video and photos posted on sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. This may be unavoidable, for example, when professional media are excluded from an event by the authorities; when a witness has posted exclusive or extraordinary shots of a news event; when the only available photo of a person in the news is on a site such as Facebook; or when a posted video or photo becomes a story in itself. (Appendix 6b)

6.8.3 Prioritising the Professional

Responding to issues of collapsed contexts, blurred boundaries and public displays of connection, the guidelines make it clear that newsworkers are considered representatives of the agency even when communicating on platforms of mass self-communication therefore they are urged to *always* consider their actions on social media through a professional journalistic lens. All three agencies require newsworkers to clearly identify themselves as journalists in their profile if they use the site for professional purposes. This coupled with encouragement to open accounts for work purposes and the advice that newsworkers should have a single account for both personal and professional use means that newsworkers are encouraged to always identify themselves as such. Only AFP differ slightly in their approach, suggesting that a single account is preferred but recommending that if a newsworker feels strongly about having a personal social media presence, they should open separate work and private social media accounts, adding that "The private account should make no reference to your role as a journalist at AFP." Interestingly, this comes into conflict with certain social media cultures of practice, such

as that of Facebook which urges users to only have one individual account which is an accurate representation of the user's offline identity[56]. This is also despite AFP's insistence that newsworkers "Respect the user rules for each individual site." It is important to note that although this chapter largely considers the characteristics of a broadly common culture of practice related to social media, each site shapes its own network culture. These cultures can support distinct practices and establish quite different sets of accepted social rules, which may interact with journalism in notably different ways but the guidelines take no account of these differences.

For AFP, the solution to the personal-professional dilemma is adherence *in all cases* to existing global news agency codes of practice. They state that:

> … *even if personal accounts are being used.* All content should:
> - Broadly conform to the spirit of the AFP stylebook, the ethical values of the agency, and its guiding principles of fairness and balance…
> - Respect the independence and impartiality of AFP.
>   (Appendix 6b emphasis added)

What is clear is that the agencies advocate the application of principles and values which underlie the news agency culture of practice - including impartiality, balance, objectivity and independence – to social media practice. This extends beyond using social media for news work to all use of the technology. For example, the professional seeps into the personal when AFP advise newsworkers to:

> Avoid criticising other media, regardless of whether they are clients or not."… "Remain neutral when commenting on the regions, countries or

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[56] Facebook states in its terms and conditions that "Facebook users provide their real names and information, and we need your help to keep it that way." They list certain "commitments" the user makes relating to the account, such as "You will not provide any false personal information on Facebook, or create an account for anyone other than yourself without permission; You will not create more than one personal account; You will keep your contact information accurate and up-to-date; You will not share your password (or in the case of developers, your secret key), let anyone else access your account, or do anything else that might jeopardize the security of your account; You will not transfer your account (including any Page or application you administer) to anyone without first getting our written permission; If you select a username or similar identifier for your account or Page, we reserve the right to remove or reclaim it if we believe it is appropriate (such as when a trademark owner complains about a username that does not closely relate to a user's actual name).

governments you cover. You should also refrain from any comments that could harm the agency's image of impartiality. (Appendix 6b)

The assumption is that even in personal use, newsworkers should act according to global news agency standards and take responsibility for maintaining professionalism. This overrides the common cultural practices associated with social media, such as 'sharing' of personal opinions and information.

Although all three agencies recommend that newsworkers state in their profile that they speak only for themselves and not for the agency, they close down the types of expression newsworkers can engage in in these spaces. For example, AP state: "Employees may not include political affiliations in their profiles and should not make any postings that express political views." The agencies advise newsworkers that even if they use social media in a private capacity they should not transgress the news agency core principles in case the information should become public due to the archived and easily replicable nature of this type of communication. For example, AP remind newsworkers of their overarching affiliation and obligation to the agency, even in social and non-professional contexts, stating: "Employees should be mindful that any opinions or personal information they disclose about themselves or colleagues may be linked to the AP's name. That's true even if staffers restrict their pages to viewing only by friends." Reuters conceptually separate "personal" communication from "professional" communication and propose that their journalists have all the "rights of citizens", saying: "If we want to tweet or post about a school play, a film or a favorite recipe, we are free to do so." They then juxtapose this with the journalistic use of social media, warning that: "When dealing with matters of public importance and actual or potential subjects of coverage, however, Reuters journalists should be mindful of the impact their publicly expressed opinions can have on their work and on Reuters." This approach urges newsworkers to consider all social media practice they engage in first and foremost through a professional lens, which relegates social media norms and conventions – core parts of its culture of practice - to a secondary position.

6.8.4 Professionally Social: Amending and Applying Journalistic Practice

Regarding automated interaction and social media protocol, the agencies identify the features and cultural practices that cannot be changed (e.g. 'Liking', 'Friending' etc.,)

and suggest ways of combining them with established practices in order to make them acceptable. For example, for AP: "It is acceptable to extend and accept Facebook friend requests from sources, politicians and newsmakers if necessary for reporting purposes, and to follow them on Twitter", however in order to make this social media convention comply with journalistic standards of impartiality and balance, "staffers should try to make this kind of contact with figures on both sides of controversial issues."

To combat the risk of posting something on social media that may be considered inappropriate by the agency (and that due to the affordances of social media, would become persistent, scalable, searchable and replicable), Reuters advise that: "When in doubt about a post, tweet or other action on social networks, we must enlist a second pair of eyes, even at the cost of some delay." The procedure of checking or peer review is well-established practice in professional journalism and it is suggested that queries regarding new technologies should be discussed with other members of the organisation – a process through which cultural values can be challenged and negotiated or reinforced. Reuters advise: "When in doubt, talk to colleagues, your editor or your supervisor." However, some established principles appear to be approached differently for situations that arise in these environments. For example, Reuters argue that: "The "news value" of an item we find online may trump the need to get permission from the copyright holder before running it." In these instances, Reuters advise that a disclaimer should be included alongside the material, however the basic principle here is that the material does not need to have been independently verified by the agency before being published by them.

6.8.5 Journalistic Judgement and Instinct: Making Room for Autonomy

Asserting that social media are 'new tools' for the same job and that newsworkers should simply apply their existing knowledge, ethics and practices to this new environment, the guidelines also leave room for an element of newsworkers' autonomy. Reuters state: "you will need to exercise judgment in many areas" and explain that: "One of the distinguishing features of Reuters is the trust invested in the judgment of its journalists – and we will continue to look to our journalists to use their common sense in dealing with these new challenges." The concept of "common sense" is also regularly referenced alongside "journalistic instinct". The AP state that: "… a lot of these decisions need to be made on a case-by-case basis, and they require you to call on your journalistic instincts," whilst AFP explain: "Under most circumstances, common sense and normal

practice as outlined in our Stylebook guarantees proper usage of material posted on the networks."

This journalistic judgement however is assumed to be strongest in familiar arenas so newsworkers are advised that the best recourse when conducting journalistic work in these spaces is to take the communication 'off social media' and move to more traditional methods such as phone/Skype or face-to-face interaction. The assumption here is that newsworkers' skills of judgment and instinct can be more easily applied in these familiar contexts because they have developed expertise in using common communication technologies but also because these technologies allow for less anonymity by providing real-time visual or aural interaction which is absent in social media interaction.

6.9 Discussion and Conclusion: 'Professionalising' Social Media Practice

As discussed in Chapter 3, digital architectures act as structural forces, shaping the types of actions and interactions that are possible. Social media have different features and functions, which are engaged with differently by different users but their fundamental architectures afford and promote certain interpretations and practices. In the news production context, social media architectures shape how newsworkers engage in these spaces, which causes problems for professional news organisations such as GNAs when the cultures of practice that develop around the technologies contradict or destabilise the established codes, principles and modus operandai of professional practice. Guidelines represent the agencies' attempt to regain organisational control of the use of these externally created technologies over which they have little influence, and to extend professional control over the rules governing social practice for newsworkers operating in networked publics. GNAs are thus asserting control over engagement in the social media sphere that impacts both newsworkers and the public. These findings support Domingo et al.'s argument that: "In which part of the production process audiences can participate, and to what extent, is in fact a decision of institutional media" (2008: 332).

The introduction of social media into the global news agency infrastructure has created an antagonism that mirrors the tension between media corporations and Internet platforms highlighted by Siapera (2013) and Lewis (2012). The guidelines illustrate GNAs trying to manage the transition of journalists from the familiar territory of established journalistic practice to the terra nova of social media practice through framing

them as 'competing cultures'. This frame is based upon an idealised conception of global news agency journalism which considers the principles of objectivity, impartiality, and independence to be achievable not only in news construction but in professional practice. By updating the wider body of guidelines to address social media, GNAs are ensuring that their formalised informational infrastructure continues to be in line with their traditional principles and values despite the introduction of a new and external influence. In this way, they are ensuring a level of *professional social media literacy* amongst their newsworkers by explaining the role that the architectures and affordances play in shaping the new environment in which they are/will be participating. This literacy is GNA-specific and equips newsworkers with the specific knowledge and understanding that is preferred by managerial stakeholders who created the guidelines (acting as representatives of the GNA as an institution). Importantly, GNAs are moulding the terms of the discussion and attempting to control how social media practice is evaluated by using a complex problem-cause-solution framing mechanism which constructs a dominant 'competing cultures' frame. This frame has resonance with the 'conflict' frame commonly found in analysis of news (Patterson 1993, Cappella and Jamieson 1997, de Vreese 2005, Neuman et al. 1992, Semetko and Valkenburg 2000). This allows them to define what is and what is not 'professionally acceptable' with regard to social media and to present their approach as one based on internal consensus. This hides tensions, contradictions, and conflict within GNAs and overrides a lack of consensus in the wider journalism sphere regarding how social media should be used and understood. In this way GNAs are promoting their version of professionalism and their notion of social media expertise. They are also ensuring that the elements of infrastructure that support traditional notions of credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability do not break down as part of a broader effort to ensure that GNA legitimacy in the journalism sphere is not undermined.

The guidelines argue that longstanding principles of GNA journalism remain ostensibly the same and only the practices by which newsworkers accomplish news production tasks has altered. However, in order to achieve these principles in social media practice, compromises are being made and understandings of what meets GNA standards are changing. Although reference is regularly made to continuity with established news values and practices underpinning agency professionalism - applying "the same" values and principles to a new space – some of the advice in these guidelines does indicate that at an organisational level, new conceptions of journalistic professionalism may be emerging. The guidelines explicitly frame the new goals set by the agencies and new

methods used to reach goals as based on existing principles but they are simultaneously renegotiating shared notions of professionalism and newsworkers' practices. Practices that may have previously been considered 'unprofessional' or 'pushing the boundaries' of accepted practice are standardised in the guidelines in a way that aligns them with established norms. Global news agencies have clearly not strayed far from their traditional tenets of journalistic professionalism, but as the environment in which they practice journalism has changed, they have adapted practices and sanctioned changes that may have unintended and unforeseen consequences for shared professional culture and notions of professionalism. Further discussion of these changes and their implications is located in Chapter 8, in which the relationship between the framing of social media in the guidelines, the organisational use of social media, and newsworkers' understandings and use of social media discussed.

Chapter 5 investigated the role of organisational accounts, which are used as an official representation of the agency on social networks and are a key part of news agency social media use that is absent from the guidelines. This chapter then addressed organisational efforts to frame and structure social media practice at GNAs. It has shown that there is a wealth of understanding to gain about organisational and journalistic interpretations of news production issues, including new technology, from the systematic analysis of the framing of (social media) guidelines and other policy documents in news organisations. The guidelines however provide no detail about who is using social media and who is not, how they are using these technologies, how they understand them, and why they are using them in this manner. The following chapter (Chapter 7) thus moves on to analyse individual newsworkers' social media practice as well as their perceptions and understandings of these technologies using extensive qualitative data from interview and observation.

Chapter 7. Results of Interview Analysis

Renegotiating GNA Professionalism for a 'Social' Space

7.1 Summary

This chapter interrogates and explains how GNA newsworkers are using social media and how they understand these technologies in relation to newswork. Through thematic analysis of transcribed interview data, several trends and themes became clear. Firstly, some newsworkers are now *social networking the news*: using social media technologies and the digital and networked practices they afford to fulfil journalistic goals. But social media are not fully integrated into GNA news production and are used largely in an ad hoc manner dependent on each newsworker's preferences and capabilities. Secondly, for those newsworkers who used social media, they are a boundary tool: these technologies became useful as an interface with the public at the access/observation stage and distribution stage of the news production process – i.e. the input and output stages in which news is gathered and subsequently published/supplied to the public. Finally, newsworkers have developed an ethic of 'professional sociability' which guides them in negotiating ways of interacting on social media whilst ensuring they do not breach normative boundaries of the GNA profession. This said, amongst the deliberately diverse sample (comprising managers, journalists, and social media specialists from text, photograph, video and multimedia departments in three GNAs) the research unsurprisingly finds a high level of heterogeneity. This is reflected in a multiplicity of social media uses and variation in perspectives towards social media in news production.

7.2 Introduction: Co-opting Social Media into GNA Newswork

This chapter explores newsworkers' emerging practices in social media spaces and evaluates how these technologies are impacting established norms and principles of GNA journalism. It seeks to explore both "areas of broad cultural consensus and people's more personal, private and special understandings", (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 4) and in this way highlight emerging trends in the shared GNA culture without overlooking

individual agency in news production. As explained fully in Chapter 4 (section 4.6), semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face, via Skype and via email, in which newsworkers were asked to discuss their use of and attitudes towards social media. The researcher posed a range of open-ended questions and used verbal prompts to elicit elaboration and determine significance as well as to obtain examples. Using a pre-designed sample frame and purposive sampling, 33 GNA newsworkers were interviewed.

This chapter's analysis seeks to be sensitive to the diverse array of social media-related practices amongst newsworkers, who often find it difficult to categorise and explain their own social media activities. Nick Couldry argues that ethnography "needs a commitment to registering multiple voices, multiple dynamics, multiple emerging forms, all without resolving them prematurely into a neat typology or predictive model," (Couldry 2014: 127). It is argued here that this approach is essential to all qualitative work dealing with practice in periods of instability such as the one in which journalism finds itself today, however it is also necessary to highlight and interrogate commonalities and this is reflected in the chapter's thematic structure. The analysis is driven by the question: 'what joins these seemingly disparate approaches, understandings and practices?' It seeks not only to highlight common activity but to elucidate the shared discourses around social media in newswork in order to contextualise emerging practices and conventions, and situate changes to notions of GNA professionalism within the cultural context.

This chapter explicitly responds to the following of the thesis's research questions: *RQ1: What characterises social media practice in news production?' and RQ1a: 'How do GNA newsworkers use and understand social media?' RQ1b: 'How do GNAs as organisations use social media?'* (although these understandings necessarily permeate all the data collected). The analysis does not intend, nor would it be possible, to cover all aspects of newsworkers' social media use, rather it explicates key findings concerning *who, what, where, when, how* and *why* social media are used. In line with the constructivist perspective applied through the theoretical framework, the chosen route into understanding the role social media play in GNA journalism is through the discursive constructions found in newsworkers' definitions, descriptions and explanations of these technologies. The concept of infrastructure employed in this thesis's theoretical framework of cultures of practice is instrumental for interpreting social media in news production and making sense of the diversity of the spectrum of uses in the following analysis. As such, the following analysis looks at: how newsworkers describe and understand social media; how they understand the role of social media in GNA journalism; and whether/how they see their own role and identity changing in relation to

social media use. Where possible, the large amount of qualitative data has been condensed into tables and graphs whilst appendices have been designed to provide further detail and insight into the raw data. The chapter ends by suggesting what these findings mean for GNA journalism.

7.3 Social Networking the News: A Broad Spectrum and Common Core

Due to the lack of previous empirical research in this area in GNAs and the relative novelty of social media technologies that only came to prominence after 2006/7, it is important to note first and foremost that the interview data affirms that social media *were* being used by a variety of GNA newsworkers for professional (and non-professional) practices[57]. Given that GNA newsworkers have not previously had public profiles that associate them with their GNA (save for the few that maintain blogs) this shows an important development in that it makes both them and their agency significantly more visible and accessible to the public. It is clear that some newsworkers are now *social networking the news*: using social media technologies and the digital and networked practices they afford to fulfil journalistic goals.

However few newsworkers reported having been trained by their agency in social media use and there were highly contrasting views about whether these technologies constituted a core part of news production. The data revealed a wide and varied spectrum of reported social media use: newsworkers ranged from describing themselves as completely unfamiliar with the way social media worked and having had no practice at all with them to being highly familiar with the practical application of numerous different social media and having a strong understanding of the abstract implications of the digital and networked nature of these technologies. This said, the vast majority of newsworkers sat somewhere between these two extremes on the spectrum, representing the 'common core' of newsworkers. This common core displayed a general understanding of how social media function and reported a working level of skill with the most popular SNSs - primarily Twitter and Facebook - but few other types of social media (see Table 5). This

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[57] There were no official counts of the number of GNA journalists on Twitter and Facebook at the time of writing but in August 2013, AFP claimed that around 300 of their newsworkers were active on social networks and identified Twitter as the site with most AFP accounts whilst in December the journalism community Muck Rack, noted 496 Reuters journalists were on Twitter, up from 238 in 2012 (Galant 2013).

finding is unsurprising given the well documented prominence of these two SNSs in journalism globally (Cision 2013a; 2012a; 2012b) and similar findings in other news organisations (Canter 2013, Reed 2013). It is important to note that even amongst this majority of newsworkers located at the middle of the spectrum, social media tended to be an *ad-hoc addition* to the news production infrastructure – an 'add-on' used in a largely non-systematic way for work. Social media were employed in a targeted manner as and when newsworkers decided they were of clear use for a particular activity - even if for some they were used more regularly and systematically for personal activities.

7.4 *Who?* Newsgatherers and Social Media Specialists at the Forefront

For social media specialists and a few social media enthusiasts, these technologies were fully integrated into the news production infrastructure that they used on a daily basis and they saw social media as integral to GNA journalism. An AP social media specialist explained his view:

> [T]his is baked into how we pursue journalism now and so we're looking
> to use these tools in every situation where it makes sense. (*I-19)*

The creation and expansion of social media desks and teams represents an important *human* addition to news production infrastructure. These specialist newsworkers have ensured a constant, systematic, and stable point of social media activity within what has been shown to be a highly diverse and dynamic network of newsworkers. The social media specialists who head up these teams have a unique position as they bridge management and 'sharp end' newsworker roles and perform elements of both. They also carry out training and directly conduct social media newsgathering and distribution themselves. An AP manager explained:

> [P]eople find their level with it and some people really take to it and really
> want to do it, and are really engaged with it, and will do that as part of their
> daily job and for some people it's too much. So but as I say, over and above
> that we have a dedicated desk and that's what, I think it is a full time job. *(I-
> 22)*

The social media specialists interviewed were highly familiar with all angles of how their GNA and its newsworkers were using social media but in contrast, most newsworkers only had a vague understanding of these things. For example, when asked about AFP's use of Facebook, a multimedia journalist knew that her desk had a role to play in the maintenance of the agency's Facebook profile but was very uncertain about the details:

> I'm not sure. Yes, I mean yeah, it's I think erm, we've been doing… trying to put up a couple of things a day. I think it was largely [name of desk Head redacted] that was managing that rather than the rest of us on the desk. That's why I'm stumbling over that one (laughs). *(I-6)*

Individual newsworkers engaged with social media technologies and the associated organisational infrastructure (e.g. policy, social media teams etc.,) in very different ways. For example, even within a single bureau the question 'Does social media play a role in your day-to-day news work?' garnered responses from both ends of the spectrum. In AFP's London bureau, a text journalist explained a high regularity of Twitter use:

> I use Twitter at work constantly, generally via TweetDeck. I probably check TweetDeck around once every 15 minutes. *(I-3c)*

Whilst for a video editor from the same bureau, social media were entirely absent from his work and invisible to him in the agency's infrastructure:

> No. Not at all… As far as I'm aware, no-one I know here uses social media for work. (*I-16)*

This was emblematic of the varied nature of social media use in the agencies and the absence of top down influence from the agency at this point (in 2011).

Newsworkers engaged in the active work of newsgathering, often described by interviewees as those 'at the coalface', were the cohort most likely to use social media for newswork. Those involved in the packaging and production stages or in managerial oversight were least likely to use social media professionally. Managers were unlikely to engage with these technologies directly and in a practical manner (except for personal

purposes outside of work). They largely became involved with social media on a theoretical or abstract level, dealing with strategy and social media-related issues. For example, when concerns were passed up the chain of command, managers would make final decisions and would contribute to social media policy development. An AP manager exemplifies this, explaining that he used Twitter and Facebook for personal activities but didn't use social media at all for professional purposes. His engagement was limited to policy discussions and decisions as well as having the final say on social media-sourced UGC:

> … other people tend to find it and it comes up to me as part of the verification process, you know what do you think about this, so I'm part of the decision making process about whether we run something or not. *(I-22)*

In this way, social media use was linked to newsworkers' job role and its associated tasks. One AFP newsworker illustrates this, displaying a marked difference in social media use after having changed jobs between interviews from a production/packaging role to a newsgathering role. In April 2011, she explained that whilst working as a multimedia editor - largely collating, editing and packaging content from across the agency - her use was driven largely by personal interest as there was no obvious place for social media at work. Asked who uses social media in the office at that point, she explained:

> Well there is me (laughs) but I do that like as I'm working because I like it, it's not my job… I mean we're trying to make more use of it, there's, especially for stuff like we do quite a lot of live blogs now on the multimedia desk and for those I've really been encouraging people to use Twitter and I've been sort of giving a little bit of training. *(I-3)*

Here she describes very little organised use of social media in the multimedia department and highlights her efforts encouraging use of these technologies for a new product – a live blog, which necessitates desktop newsgathering. However ten months later, in the role of news editor for the text department in which she gathers and creates news, she described using Twitter at work "constantly" and explained:

I follow nearly 900 accounts, including a large number of politicians, celebrities, public bodies and fellow journalists, and their tweets are often a source of breaking news. Sometimes I'll also use Twitter to get quotes, either from a celebrity tweeter reacting to something, or from the general public…. [Social media are] an incredibly important source of breaking news; an extra source of quotes; can give us a rough idea of how many people are planning to attend an event. *(I-3c)*

In this new role, monitoring and gathering information were key tasks and social media represented an important method of completing them. Even when 'following' sources that were already monitored through other newsroom methods, social media was adding a new dimension to newsgathering. This example shows that the same newsworker could clearly display different traits in different roles and highlights that individual newsworkers' engagement with these technologies may alter over time (a factor which is likely to be linked to the broader trend across the agencies of increasing use - see 7.5).

7.5 *What?* The Common Denominator: Twitter and Facebook

All interviewees that were active on social media stressed that they primarily used Twitter and Facebook. The more avid social media users briefly mentioned a number of other examples – most commonly Google Plus, Tumblr, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest, Instagram, Sound Cloud and Foursquare[58]. However the element they all had in common was that either Twitter or Facebook (or both) were their primary sites, i.e. they used these SNSs most regularly and saw them as most important for their work. A Reuters photographer displays this typical emphasis on the two leading SNSs and notably even explains other social media sites he uses in terms of their relationship to Twitter rather than name them:

I use the following well know (sic) sources
- Twitter

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[58] There were also some more country specific examples: mixi, Socialcam, Loopcam, Ustream NicoNico, Viber. Also mentioned were blogs and RSS feeds but interviewees questioned whether they considered these to be social media.

o Twitter webpage

o Tweetdeck

o Twitpic

-Facebook

o News provider apps that Wall links lead to

- A range of photo hosting sites that Twitter users link to *(I-33)*

Newsworkers perceived these two sites as affording different uses. A multimedia manager at AFP indicated the importance of Twitter and Facebook for journalism but drew attention to what she saw as the differences between them:

> There are plenty [of social media] but I think the others are more peripheral though. I think if you speak to any journalist really, Twitter is the one for breaking news. Facebook is the much slower format, it's much more like a, I think of Facebook as being much more like a magazine compared to Twitter being more like a news ticker that you might see on TV or something. *(I-2)*

A common theme emerged of newsworkers considering Twitter to be more useful professionally whilst Facebook, though also used for professional practice, was considered to be more applicable for personal and non-professional activities. An AFP multimedia journalist explained:

> I use Facebook much more for managing my personal life, but I will sometimes use it for work too -- generally for the events function, e.g. to check how many people are planning to attend a protest. *(I-3c)*

This corresponds with findings in the wider industry that show Twitter leading the way amongst journalists in the UK (2013b; 2012a) and many countries globally (Cision 2013a; 2012b) and also relates to the affordances and cultural norms that have developed for each site. Jones argues that SNSs have conceptual models of sociality designed into their architectures, which work as a digital structure for shaping social practice and points out that Facebook has focused on personal profile building and Twitter on the capacity to broadcast/send frequent SMS type messages (Jones 2013). Twitter privileges brevity, immediacy and communication that is "often event-based and event-driven, much like

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the content that traditionally makes the news," (Hermida 2013: 4), whilst Facebook has been distinguished by its features for extended communication, social organising and visually displaying images, and its 'real name' policy has encouraged connections between friends. The Head of an AFP foreign bureau echoed this widespread view of Twitter and Facebook but drew attention to how his habits and practices have changed and evolved over time - a common observation amongst the more active social media users.

> Twitter is by far the most important for my work now, but I am slowly using Google+ more alongside it. Facebook is rarely used for 'work' in that sense, and I use Tumblr far more rarely now than, say, 2-3 months ago (i.e. pre-Google+). *(I-11)*

As this example shows, social media use was both *dynamic* and *context specific*. Newsworkers' use changed over time, with location and job role, as well as in relation to social trends, organisational training and the news production tasks at hand. Three newsworkers from AP and Reuters who worked in Myanmar (Burma) for example bucked the Twitter trend and used Facebook for work considerably more than any other social media because of the extent of popularity of this one SNS in the country. An AP social media specialist meanwhile explained how his choice of which social media sites to use for newsgathering is decided on a case-by-case basis:

> [F]or me the social media sites, really the way that I use them depends on the situation completely. So if there's an event where I know that there, say there was a pop concert where there were 17-year-olds or 18-year-olds using social media I will look on things like Twitter, Facebook and I will search in certain ways. If it's an event that was older people or less tech savvy people then I'll use another network and I would use different search terms there and use a different combination. *(I-20)*

Facebook and Twitter clearly dominated the scene but there was significant diversity and dynamism regarding reported use, which newsworkers saw as shaped to a high degree by context.

7.4 *Where?* Mobile… and My Network

Social media are mobile technologies that can be used on a variety of Internet-enabled devices. Therefore providing an internet connection and suitable device are available, social media sites can be accessed anywhere. Newsworkers took advantage of this mobility and reported using social media in their own homes and various other non-work environments, on the move (e.g. on public transport) as well as at work. Place was rarely brought up during the interviews as a defining factor in use except when newsworkers explained that they did not see social media as restricted by location. They saw social media as their own network that travelled with them across devices and across the boundaries of work and play. An AFP newsgatherer and editor indicated that social media were embedded in her day-to-day technical infrastructure, which can be seen in the multiple methods she used for accessing them in various scenarios:

> Desktop computer (which has TweetDeck installed...) I also have the Twitter and Facebook apps on my iPhone. I check Twitter and the BBC website on my phone on my way into work. I also often check Twitter when I'm out reporting, e.g. standing in the freezing cold outside a court, trying to get some idea of when the verdict will be. *(I-3c)*

As already discussed, newsgatherers were the cohort most likely to use social media for newswork and this included both those 'in-the-field' and in the newsroom. However there was a distinction between these two groups - those out in the field were less likely to be (deliberately) gathering UGC, instead using social media to build networks, gather information about their beats, contact and interact with other users etc., whilst desk-based newsgatherers, including those in social media teams, would focus more heavily on locating and verifying UGC.

Perhaps unsurprisingly due to the wider growth in the popularity of social media worldwide and increasing recognition of its developing role in news production amongst the journalistic community, a pattern of growing engagement became clear over the course of the research.

7.5 *When?* Growing Engagement: Top-down Efforts and Grass Roots Change

There was evidence of a general move towards more widespread use of social media technologies over the data collection period, which was a result of both strategic organisational efforts and grass roots 'cultural' change. This was most evident at AFP where news managers had explained in April 2011 that there was very little use of social media except amongst a few interested newsworkers and those in charge of maintaining the agency's social media accounts. By February 2012, social media had become embedded in newsroom technological infrastructure and expert knowledge regarding their use had been shared. Software to manage social media use, such as TweetDeck, was installed on all computers and there was now a general expectation that all newsworkers would have a minimum level of familiarity with social media. One AFP news manager explained this in a second interview:

> TweetDeck has become - you can't really do without it in a way now, we've all got it installed. Especially, I think probably it's fair to say it came from the Washington office first and they, as they used it more of course everybody else is going to use it more because they are telling you things that they've seen on Twitter. *(I-10a)*

Prior to interview data collection beginning in February 2011, all three agencies already had strategies for organisational social media use (see 5.3 & 5.4) and it was during the ensuing data collection period that efforts to organise small social media teams, dedicated to the oversight and management of social media activity amongst the vast network of newsworkers, were underway. The Head of AFP's London bureau explained:

> At the beginning it was a matter for volunteers to get into this without a huge implication of the editorial management. That has changed, I think that is the main change since we have discussed last year. *(I-17a)*

In this way, social media were certainly becoming more broadly recognised as a news production tool and accepted as part of the day-to-day GNA infrastructure throughout 2011, 2012 and 2013, but there remained few expert users amongst a growing cohort of non-expert users and the remaining large proportion of non-users. In 2011, few

reported having had formal training in how to use social media. Social media editors and managers referred extensively to policy but although most other newsworkers were aware of the existence of policy and guidelines, few reported actively referring to them (see Table 5). Managers at all three agencies explained that they were expanding their training so that more newsworkers could use social media effectively in order to ensure a basic standard of competency across the agency and encourage the decentralisation of social media newswork.

7.5.1 When is Social Media (News Production Infrastructure)?

As discussed in the theoretical framework in Chapter 3, Star and Bowker argue that "infrastructure is not absolute, but relative to working conditions. It never stands apart from the people who design, maintain and use it", (2006: 230). Thus they ask, not *what* is an infrastructure but *when* is an infrastructure? This approach focuses attention on no one single aspect but on the nexus when various factors converge in context to make social media useful for news production. It can help explain the conditions for *when, how,* and *why* social media have become part of news production.

For example, newsworkers initially identified and employed social media as part of the infrastructure for news production at GNAs when the existing set of technologies and practices was not capable of enabling the necessary processes – or as Star and Bowker put it, when the existing infrastructure 'broke down' (2006). A social media specialist at AP provides an example of this, explaining how in a breaking news scenario when time, space, and resource constraints prevent the usual mode of newsgathering, social media plug the gap in existing infrastructure:

> I would say it's probably more like *when* we can't get people in the field because we can get people to most places and we do eventually but in the immediate aftermath of a breaking story, *that's when* we rely on social media and UGC. *(I-20, emphasis added)*

A Reuters managerial photo editor explains this further:

…what you have in a timeline: this is when event happens [holds left hand out], this is when mainstream media report it [holds right hand out], this is the social media sphere [indicates space inbetween], we are moving from this point slowly to this point [moves right hand towards left hand) because we have to get to where the news breaks and we're experimenting with different ways to try to see how we can walk into these murky waters. Does that explain it? *(I-)*

Newsworkers described a variety of different scenarios in which social media could be used to perform a task that could not be accomplished without them or to perform a task more efficiently. These scenarios arose when intersecting factors (e.g. time, geography, politics, resources etc.,) precluded 'traditional' newswork. Though these scenarios were numerous and diverse, there was a clear pattern regarding *when in the process of news production* they arose. This can be best illustrated using an adaptation of Singer et al.'s 5-stage model of news production (2011), previously outlined in Chapter 2. Illustration A below illustrates that use of social media was heavily centred around: a) gathering at the access/observation stage, b) publishing at the distribution stage and c) reflection and dialogue at the interpretation stage.

Illustration A: Social Media in the News Production Process
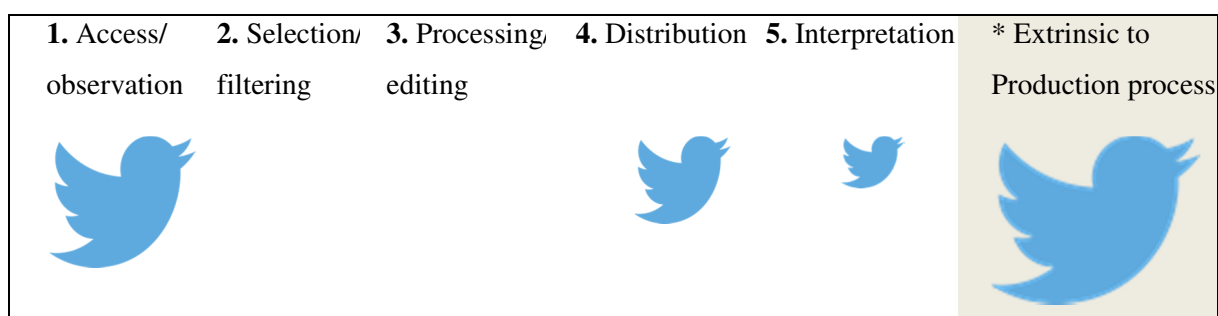
Typology adapted from Singer et al. (2011), originally created by Domingo et al. (2008).
* The bigger the Twitter logo, the more social media were used at this stage.

Illustration A also shows that the largest category of social media use fell outside of the previously defined 5-stage news production process - a category which is referred to in this analysis as 'extrinsic to the production process.' The practices that comprise this category were considered by newsworkers not to *directly* contribute to news production

in an independently measurable way but were at the same time often seen to be related to the performance of their role. This category will be further discussed in 7.6.5 after the practices related to news production have been analysed.

7.6 *How and Why?*

The data from which Illustration A was constructed is shown in more detail below in Table 5. This table was itself an output of the coding of interview transcriptions (see 4.6) and outlines how and why newsworkers described using social media. There was a multiplicity of uses, which though seemingly disparate at first glance, fit into the 13 categories explained in Table 5. As the purpose of this chapter is to explore trends and commonalities in social media practice whilst not losing sight of the differences, the table provides insight into the different facets of interviewees' described social media uses by grouping them in a condensed form according to the broader categories of social media practice into which they fit but it must be noted that each interviewee described a different combination of uses.

Table 5 and Illustration A illustrate how social media become part of news production infrastructure when journalistic tasks necessitate interaction *beyond the border of the news agency*. The following section explicates the key finding that GNA newsworkers were using social media as non-institutional boundary tools.

Table 5: Categories of newsworkers' use of social media (page 1)

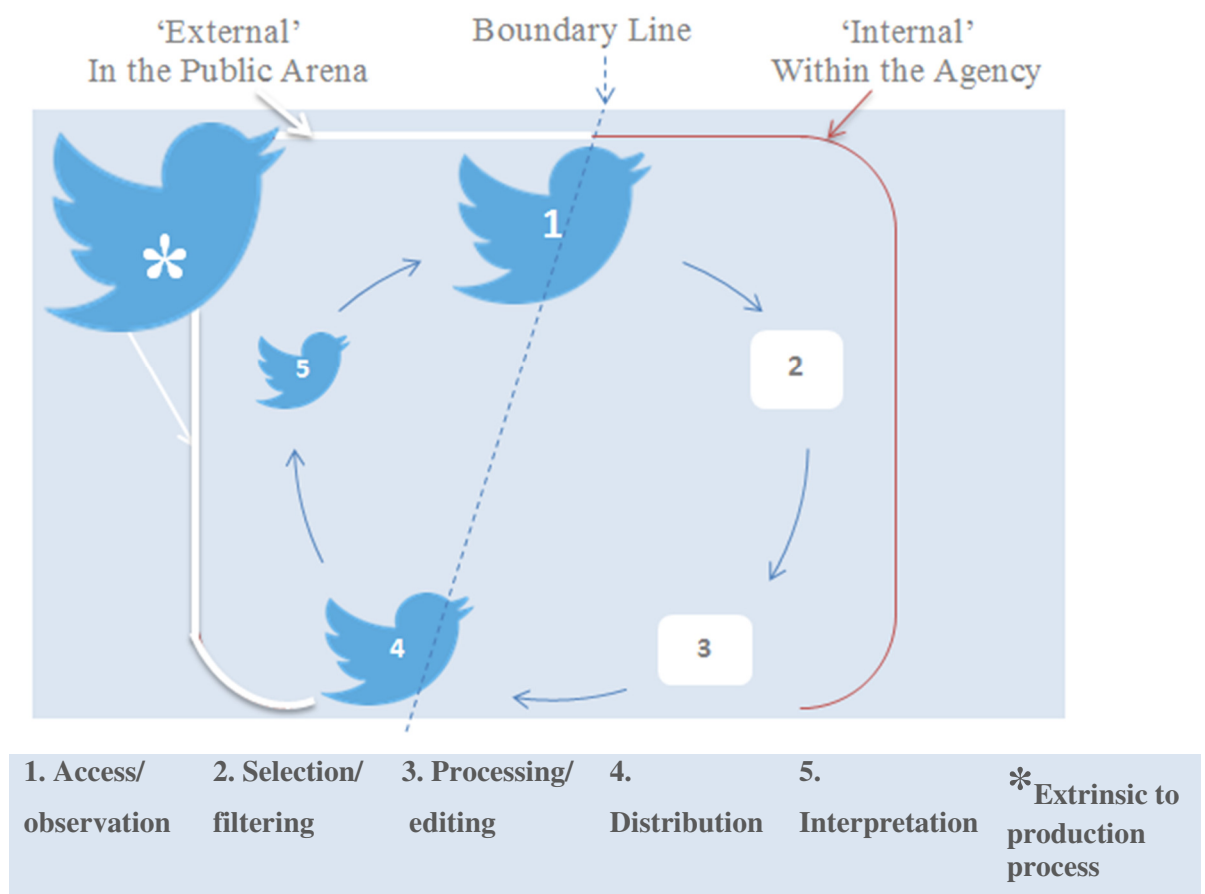| Production Stage	Category of Social Media Practice	Associated Social Media Practice/Process	Functions
1. Access/ observation	**Listening & Monitoring** Purposefully organising social media networks so that they can oversee other users' posts and activity related to their beat - accomplished through regular manual checking of the site and creation of automated alerts.	*Identifying breaking news* *Getting tips for stories* *Discovering trends* *Discovering UGC and material posted by official sources* *Discovering relevant users to follow*	Info. gathering
	Targeted Seeking Seeking specific information in a targeted and deliberate manner in relation to story creation.	*Reading in*: (updating knowledge of their area of responsibility prior to beginning a shift.) *Finding contacts and potential sources* *Searching for people in the news* *Sourcing ideas, evidence and expertise* *Searching for trends* *Searching for, locating, and gathering UGC*	Info. gathering
	Contacting Using social media sites' communicative and interactive features to engage in dialogue with other users either publicly or privately either by initiating interaction or responding to other users' who have contacted them.	*Requesting information* *Requesting permission to use UGC* *Responding to tip offs and information offered by users* *Involving other users in research*	Info. gathering, communicating beyond GNA, info. sharing
2.Selection/ filtering	None	None	N/A
3.Processing/ editing	None	None	N/A
4. Distribution	**Distributing Finished Content** Distributing completed news stories via links on social media sites. Promoting products through distribution.	*Distributing links* to content on their websites and those of their clients *Distributing small pieces or 'teasers' of finished content* (e.g. single picture, a quote, a headline)	Info. sharing

Table 5: Categories of newsworkers' use of social media (page 2)

	Distributing Additional Information Distributing news in progress as well as interesting information that will not make it into the news or 'colour'.	*Distributing snippets of news & information that may or may not be in final story at any point during production process.*	Info. Sharing
	Breaking News	*Distributing the earliest verified information about an important news event (but never before it is on the wire).*	Info. sharing
	Real-time Posting Distributing information as it is gathered, e.g. live-tweeting	*Distributing pieces of information that do not give away main story but that are occurring at the time of event, e.g. that 'add colour', describe scene etc.*	Info. sharing
5. Interpretation	**Interpreting GNA News Output** Commenting on, discussing and analysing news output	*Providing commentary about news content* *Discussing news content with other users*	Info. sharing Communicating beyond GNA
* Extrinsic to process	**Identity Construction** Creating & maintaining public-facing profiles	*Creating profiles & curating them over time* *Curating information other users make visible on their timeline*	Info. sharing
	Networking Connecting with an array of users. Building up and maintaining contacts through the network enabled by the social media sites.	*Connecting with users - from individuals to groups, organisations and institutions - not directly related to a story or area of specialisation.* *Building a social media 'address book' by storing connections for future use, filtering and grouping them*	Communicating beyond GNA Info. gathering
	Following Interests & Listening Identifying and consuming information of interest to them.	*Monitoring and keeping abreast of information, events and issues that are of interest professionally and personally,* e.g. those relevant to their beat such as the competition, official information points (government, emergency services, NGOs etc.), public figures etc., or those of personal interest.	Info. gathering
	Interacting with Users Tailoring contact and communication with different types of users using different levels of public visibility.	*Communicating with friends, family, personal acquaintances as well as colleagues, work-related acquaintance and strangers.*	Communicating beyond GNA
	Self-expression	*Posting words and images, not necessarily in dialogue with other users.*	Info. sharing

7.6.1 Boundary Tools

Across all news production stages, newsworkers' described uses of social media fit into three broad functions: information gathering, communicating with people outside of the agency, and information sharing (see Table 5). This finding, combined with the observation that those newsworkers with roles that interface with the public were more prolific social media users, suggests that social media represent a *non-institutional boundary tool* in GNA journalism: they are useful as an information and communication technology that breaches the borders of the organisation for newsworkers, enabling them to interact with actors outside of their institution and to access information not available through the usual institutional channels. Illustration B maps this dynamic.

Illustration B: Prevalence of social media use at each stage of news production according to where it occurs in relation to the boundaries of the GNA

1. Access/ observation	2. Selection/ filtering	3. Processing/ editing	4. Distribution	5. Interpretation	*Extrinsic to production process

*Typology adapted from Singer et al. (2011), originally created by Domingo et al. (2008). * The bigger the Twitter logo, the more social media were used at this stage.*

As boyd highlights, social media afford persistence, replicability, searchability and scalability (2010). These affordances can render social networks of people and traces of their activity visible to newsworkers, which enables core journalistic tasks to be performed in this online and networked space (as evidenced in Table 5). Importantly for global news agencies, these affordances also make GNA newsworkers visible to broad networks of people in a new way and to a much greater extent than ever before, thus rendering them easily searchable and contactable. Prior to this, the majority of GNA newsworkers had no public facing profile, commensurate with their behind-the-scenes and client-facing role. This online visibility of GNA newsworkers - both individually and on aggregate - creates a representation of the boundaries of the organisation, which other social media users and the public can recognise and understand. Their presence propels the agencies into the public domain in a new way and in practical terms places newsworkers at the 'digital interface' of the agency. On a conceptual level, social media also represent boundary tools in that they are used by newsworkers to negotiate and express GNA professionalism symbolically in action – a process referred to by Revers as boundary performance in which journalists define and distinguish themselves and their work (2014). Symbolic contests over the definition of GNA journalism are being played out most prominently in this arena of social media practice and as Carlson and Lewis point out, they "mark a material struggle over resource. In short: boundaries have consequences" (2015: i). The outcomes and implications of this boundary maintenance is further discussed in 8.5-8.9.

In addition to making the newsworker visible, social media make their newswork persistent, archived, scalable and searchable in new ways. How then are newsworkers making sense of the role of social media in GNA news production and has social media changed the way they see themselves or the public/audience in GNA journalism?

7.7 Strategic Interaction and Controlled Participation

Table 5 illustrates that newsworkers co-opted social media technologies into the production infrastructure at the initial *access/observation stage* for the practices of a) listening and monitoring, b) targeted seeking and c) contacting. The associated practices show that newsworkers were willing for users to make suggestions, provide UGC and discuss the news agenda. This stage generates the source material of stories and such activity suggests that GNA newsworkers are actively seeking to incorporate input from the public

(tips, suggestions, perspectives, UGC etc.) For example, an AFP text journalist explained how she used her personal Facebook account to source user contributions:

> Well Facebook obviously you just use because, I've used my personal Facebook account to ask for stories. Just to put kind of word out to people I know, which has had mixed results, I mean it's not a brilliant thing… so yeah that I use quite a lot because I have a kind of varied network of friends and acquaintances in Britain which is quite useful for that kind of thing. *(I-12)*

This use of personal connections for work shows how social media represent the intersection of personal/private and professional/public. It also suggests that newsworkers were willing to allow a degree of transparency into their working process, given that their posts and interactions are visible to others on the networks. For example, some newsworkers reported 'working out loud' by mooting ideas and posting selected elements of a story as they gathered and constructed it, often looking for feedback from this practice. However newsworkers did not view these practices as allowing non-professionals to influence the news agenda. Their involvement was seen as supplementary to the core role performed by the professional journalists and the GNA of determining what was newsworthy and how to construct the news. In line with this, social media technologies were viewed by most as an *additional* tool and a *'last resort'* - at times useful but not essential for them to perform their job. The sourcing of UGC through social media was almost unanimously considered to be an less desirable substitute for professionally produced content, and one that should be avoided unless entirely necessary.

7.6.2 Social Media for UGC: a Growing Practice but Last Resort

Most interviewees had no personal experience of sourcing UGC from social media but were aware that this process was being done by colleagues in the agency. As such, determining the extent that social media were being used to source material was difficult. This said, social media specialists and managers all indicated that the use of social media-sourced UGC was on the rise as newsworkers have got to grips with new practices. An AP social media editor explained:

I'd say we've seen content taken from social media or sourced through social media enter, get integrated into more of our output. So whether it's… we're now more confident to verify, source and verify video that is shared on social media. We know how to verify information sourced from tweets and how to feed that into reporting. So you definitely see more social media content fed into our traditional reporting platforms. *(I-20)*

Not only does UGC more commonly make it into news agency journalism but it is also popular with clients – a fact which managers and social media editors are aware of through rankings. Another social media specialist at AP explained:

We put out sort of regular rankings of what the most used pieces of video content are for APTN clients around the world and day after day after day user-generated content from Syria gets onto that list and very often tops it. It's very well represented in our most popular content. *(I-19)*

Obtaining material this way was however seen as a last resort to be used when agency newsworkers could not get it themselves, when other professional journalists could not be hired to obtain it, or when material could not be obtained through the extensive network of news organisations with which GNAs have relationships. Many newsworkers avoided UGC entirely, not trusting its veracity or their skills to determine it, whilst those few who sought UGC were looking almost exclusively for material that was otherwise unobtainable. The only exception to this was material that was - in the words of an AP social media editor - "amazingly compelling", which may outdo professionally gathered content. Unplanned and spontaneous events such as natural disasters and social unrest were regularly cited as cases in which social media sourced UGC has been important for obtaining images and eyewitness accounts, as were conflict zones. An AP social media specialist explained how useful social media was in sourcing content in relation to the Arab Spring when it was unsafe for newsworkers to operate:

Syria is a classic example because it is a place where most of the time we can't even have a reporter anywhere within the borders and neither can anybody else unless they want to just go along with what the regime wants them to do so we try to get a lot of user-generated content and a lot of that is user video, probably more than anything else. *(I-19)*

A Reuters photographer also explained how social media have extended his reach when covering a large region with very few staff by providing access to a public full of amateur photographers:

> I can more easily source photographs from location where I do not have any resources (staff or stringer photographer). In my area of responsibility (Australia, New Zealand and the south Pacific) the geographic area is huge with a sparse population and equally small pool of professional photographers. *(I-33)*

An AP news manager corroborated this but explained that UGC was always second preference to professionally produced material:

> I'm a great believer in the core of journalism being about witness and so it doesn't replace that. My preference would always, always be if the story is big enough to get my own people there so we can say hand on heart that we saw this, we reported it and sometimes that is just impossible. *(I-22)*

Not everybody was comfortable using social media-sourced UGC at all and there were clearly contrasting opinions amongst newsworkers that led to discussions and debates as cases arose. A Reuters manager explained:

> The reality is I'm very against UGC, I always have been, I think it's a whole can of worms – me and him [points to colleague] completely disagree on it." *(I-27)*

The affordances of social media - particularly scalability and searchability - are what enable journalists to locate relevant UGC but are also what makes it so difficult for them to obtain the information they need to verify it. Social media have been known to bring tensions to the fore, particularly in traditional newsrooms that have been used to dealing primarily with professionally produced content and now have to face the challenges of unverified UGC. Traditionally, very little non-professionally produced material made it into GNA copy but with an increase in content coming from users, more time was spent verifying, checking, and authenticating UGC. This has meant a rebalancing of newsworkers' time and skills. A

Reuters photographer described the main challenge as "staying on top of new developments/software/techniques" and explained the pressures of verifying UGC:

> This takes a lot of my time during breaking news stories… A number of times I have found very strong images via social media of a breaking news event however during the verification process have learned that the image(s) are not of the event they were attributed to. *(I-33)*

The persistence and replicability of data on social media mean content can be taken out of context. Many interviewees highlighted the view that their role as a GNA journalist was to seek to recover that context and analyse it in order to explain the UGC and contextualise it through their journalism. Knowing that their clients also had direct access to this material on these public networks in the same way that they did, newsworkers felt that they were not merely passing on UGC but adding context as well as a 'stamp of approval'. Lewis (2012) foregrounds the tension caused by open participation of 'prosumers' in journalism and highlights professional journalists' need to reassert control over content. One AP production worker in video explained:

> I mean one thing that I would like to reiterate is that we use social media but the most important thing we can do is give it context. *(I-21)*

Comments like this indicate that newsworkers are negotiating and articulating a role for themselves as experts with the ability to contextualise the piecemeal information that circulates in the social media sphere. Persistence and replicability afford the easy reposting of content. This makes it difficult to trace original versions of UGC data, which are needed for verification, and it affords the transformation of content, which can undermine authenticity and reliability. As such, UGC-related social media practice is a particularly disputed and contested arena in which GNA newsworkers are discussing and negotiating the nature of their role. An AP manager described the impact of his decision to use a piece of UGC (which he requested not be identified here):

> It caused no end of ructions here, the conversation about 'why did we run it?' 'What were the influencing factors?' lasted about three days and it was one of the learning curves that the organisation went through about what our tolerances were, it was quite a good example in some ways because I was very

satisfied that it was the right thing to do but other colleagues were more jumpy about whether we should have run it or whether we shouldn't have done.
(I-22)

This example shows the GNA culture of practice, established on more sound and familiar sourcing practices, coming up against the difficulties thrown up by the affordances of social media – in this case user-generated material, which has been detached from its creator and therefore cannot be fully verified or permission granted for its use. In order to adhere to the GNA professional norm of providing "objective fact" newsworkers fell back on tried and tested practices, which they deemed 'rational' methods for ascertaining fact. In this environment of mistrust, one of the key practices that had developed to enable verification to be conducted to a communally accepted level was therefore moving away from social media, onto using more familiar and/or more direct forms of communication as soon as possible. This practice has been adopted by other news organisations and new media journalists including social media-focused start-ups such as Storyful (Wardle 2013).

7.6.3 Mistrust of UGC and Taking Communication off Social Media

Newsworkers had developed processes for moving communication away from social media as soon as possible at the access/observation stage. The social media aspect of the production process thus became invisible in the final product as there was no reference to the original location or means of sourcing the information when it had taken place via social media. For instance, although a statement made on Twitter or Facebook may be found by a newsworker using the site, interviewees explained that it is very irregularly quoted directly from the site. Instead the person is more likely to be contacted to provide comment directly to the agency, leaving no trace of the role social media played in surfacing or sourcing the content. In these cases, social media is 'step one' of a longer process. These sourcing processes, in place at all agencies, encouraged newsworkers to source UGC found through social media via other means - newsworkers described contacting the social media source using another form of communication, such as telephone, Skype or a face-to-face meeting. Here, mistrust of UGC and of social media as a reliable way to source information mean that GNA newsworkers revert back to tried-and-tested technologies. This means that UGC is

often not listed in archives as coming from social media but more broadly as third party material[59]. A Reuters photojournalist explained how this works for sourcing photographs:

> On Flickr, what might happen is that you found the person you see. There's always a trace and then you would speak to them and… wherever we take a picture off anything we try to contact them. So if we've contacted them and done a deal it probably wouldn't say Flickr anymore because that picture has come in the general route. *(I-26)*

Newsworkers described the benefits of this practice as allowing them to bring to bear the skills and expertise they have developed over time as well as their journalistic 'instinct'. An AP Chief correspondent explained his reasoning for not communicating with potential sources through social media:

> Taking conversations offline help me judge what a person is saying. I've worked in journalism for 10 years and can typically tell when a person knows what they are talking about. I can also ask specific, detailed questions that draw out information that only a person involved would know. *(I-23)*

An AP social media specialist further explains how journalistic 'instinct' is difficult to bring into play in the social media environment so other forms of communication are sought:

> … when we find somebody through social media… we get them on the phone, we get talking to them the same way we would if we found them through some other means. And if we put up a Facebook post looking for reactions to something, we don't just lift those reactions from Facebook, we reach out to

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[59] In an example of this, after conducting a search of the Reuters pictures archive at the researcher's request, a managerial newsworker in the photography department at Reuters who is involved with overseeing the archive explained that there were around 350 pictures sourced from social media sites in total from an archive of nearly 6 million. This included 160 images from Reuters' now defunct proprietary UGC sourcing platform 'Your View'. Of the approximately 190 others, he explained that the social media site is rarely named and less than 10 explicitly state that they were taken from a social media site because 90% were stills taken from amateur video, many of which would have been sourced by TV stations with which Reuters has a relationship rather than by Reuters directly. As many social media-sourced images were tagged only as third party material they would not show up in a search. To further complicate the task of gauging how many social media-sourced images had been used, some were not archived due to the author's copyright restrictions and so cannot be counted though they were distributed to clients.

people and contact them directly and use our instincts to assess whether they are who they claim to be, just make sure that they are people at all and then we have a conversation and more often than not, the quotes are going to come from that conversation not from whatever it was that they posted on Facebook. *(I-20)*

There is a clear mistrust of UGC and of social media as channels to verify it. Newsworkers' role as "fact" collectors was challenged by the huge mix of information (fact, opinion, news, entertainment, hoaxes, jokes etc.,) and by the complications of applying a verification procedure in an online environment that affords anonymity and misrepresentation. In response, newsworkers extended existing "rational methods" for using third party material in order to circumvent expectations of verification: in the relatively few cases where content is taken directly from social media, a disclaimer is always attached explaining that the agency is unable to independently verify the content. For Reuters, this commonly reads:

REUTERS IS UNABLE TO INDEPENDENTLY VERIFY THE CONTENT OF THIS VIDEO, WHICH HAS BEEN OBTAINED FROM A SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITE.

and also another note:

THIS IMAGE HAS BEEN SUPPLIED BY A THIRD PARTY. IT IS DISTRIBUTED, EXACTLY AS RECEIVED BY REUTERS, AS A SERVICE TO CLIENTS *(I-26a)*

In this way, social media-sourced UGC is treated in a similar manner to other third party material despite its different origins. It is then incorporated subtly into the GNA news feeds and then becomes the choice of the subscribing client whether to pass on these disclaimers or not to the audience.

7.6.4 Closed Gates for Professional Production

Importantly, social media were absent from stages 2 and 3, which represent the filtering/gatekeeping and editing/production parts of the news production process (please

refer back to Table 5). During these two stages, newsworkers assess quality, relevance and salience of potential news and consider ethical and legal constraints in order to choose and construct the content that makes it into GNA output. These gatekeeping and production tasks were seen to be completed using core skills acquired through professional training and experience - elements which newsworkers saw as separating them from non-professionals. Newsworkers saw no role for interacting with social media users when accomplishing these tasks. This remained an uncontested space where their professional identity, authority, practices and expertise went unchallenged by the characteristics for potential participation that social media afford. This said, a few newsworkers recounted how discussions they had with users, the UGC they came across, and the information they found could feed into this part of their newswork, which could potentially influence their decision making. For example, an AP reporter explained:

> … it [UGC] could furnish an idea that would lead to more regular reporting activities either from that same source or some other source. *(I-24)*

Additionally, the initial elements of gatekeeping and filtering occur during the access and observation of information, which the previous discussion has shown has been increasingly opened up to public involvement.

7.6.5 Mutual Promotion or Breaking the Business Model?

Uses of social media for distribution (stage 4) suggests that newsworkers saw a role for themselves in the publishing and dissemination of GNA content to the public, which had previously been the role of clients[60]. Newsworkers distributed links to their own work as well as snippets of information related to their journalism that didn't make it into the agency's news file. They also published links to colleagues' work and used social media sites' automated features such as 'retweeting' and 'favouriting' on Twitter or 'liking' on Facebook to link to news published by their agency. They viewed this activity as both self-promotion and promotion of the agency - and saw these two elements as interlinked. An AFP manager explains:

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[60] (and more recently in a limited way an organisational role of the GNAs through their websites).

That's primary, a lot of it is about brand awareness, there is also then an impact that yes you can get feedback from people and that then develops your journalism. *(I-1)*

An AP reporter explained further:

I also ReTweet or Post all my AP stories to gain readership/feedback as well as some AP stories by other reporters that I think will interest my Followers, to raise our brand presence in social media… Another way to use social media is to get out information that doesn't quite make for a full story but is interesting. So it works as a kind of self-publishing or my own personal media as an individual AP reporter. If I am at an event that is not exclusive, I might tweet a photo to perk reader interest, and then follow with a story. I believe that what we are thinking and what we are doing as AP reporters assigned overseas are in themselves interesting _ or should be. *(I-24)*

There was however a clear concern about the impact social media may have on the GNA business model, which has been built on business-to-business sales of news content to media clients who traditionally don't consider GNAs their rivals but as their suppliers. Newsworkers saw their social media activity as on the one hand boosting the GNA brand and on the other hand potentially undermining the business model. They recognised users as more than sources and content contributors, they were also *consumers* who access, share, discuss, interpret and feed back on GNA news, which though seen as valuable, disrupted the commercial model. An AP social media editor explained the conflict and pointed out the pivotal role of social media in the agency's transformation:

That's a tricky thing for us as you know and the other news organisations we're talking to also know, we've been B-to-B for our whole history. That's been shifting in recent years and social has a big part in it… But it's true, if you're going to really do social when it comes to the news, you need to connect with human beings, you don't need to connect with other companies. *(I-19)*

Though it may be a useful marketing and branding platform, GNA news on social media is free to access, which newsworkers at all levels saw as potentially compromising the established business model and upsetting paying clients. This was unanimously seen as an unresolved issue that was still under debate as an AFP multimedia newsworker explained:

> There's this really long debate we've been having about if we do give stuff, too much stuff directly to the public, will that undermine our clients who pay for stuff that we do but it's something that has to be worked out I guess. We haven't got the answers yet. *(I-3)*

Incompatibilities between GNA and social media cultures were seen to create tensions that required compromise, adaptation and new ways of thinking and doing. For newsworkers, this did not involve changing the core tenets of GNA journalism but required a renegotiation of practice.

An example of this is a new role that they shared with other social media users - interpreter. Newsworkers reported engaging in interpretation using social media (stage 5) which has in the past exclusively occurred amongst the public without newsworkers' engagement as GNAs have never had avenues for publicly accessible feedback, comment or discussion. Newsworkers were largely keen for social media users to engage with them in relation to the content they distributed or had been involved in creating, i.e. for discussing and interpreting the finished news product. Newsworkers desired feedback and social media represented an important avenue for this. Social media were in this case a 'connector', facilitating the direct public-to-GNA newsworker interaction, which was previously missing. A Reuters newsworker explained how content uploaded to social media prompts interesting responses but also highlighted the time and effort needed to engage with users:

> … it's sent out through social media, like promoting that to this wide network of people and the feedback is huge and it's really interesting feedback, which is different too. But you know it makes a lot of work for some of them, some of them are like shit you have to answer everyone as well, you know.

As well as the perceived barriers of time and effort, newsworkers were also aware of the need to ensure that engaging with other users at the interpretation stage does not reflect back on their journalism or their organisation in an undesirable way. This consideration permeated all aspects of social media use, including what could be considered 'personal'.

Social media have drawn attention to the incompatibilities between the personal and professional as a result of their tendency to collapse contexts, which has at times caused conflicts of interest when newsworkers have not maintained journalistic values in their social media interactions and have been reprimanded. Some newsworkers felt that this had restricted the potential uses and made social media somewhat redundant, for example an AFP text newsworker explained:

> There's various pitfalls as well in terms of what you tweet in terms of news so there's a question of well I work for a news agency so I've got to be very careful about a) tweeting stuff that is time-sensitive and is breaking news because obviously that's where we make our money from, equally we are very, very particular about impartiality – that's kind of a big thing here. So there's also an issue about tweeting your opinion about a subject. So I find it quite difficult to navigate exactly what I would tweet other than endless links about AFP stories, which I don't think is that interesting. *(I-12)*

Interestingly however, conflict and tensions of this kind were rarely highlighted by GNA newsworkers who largely reported feeling comfortable with maintaining their role as a GNA representative outside of work in what one Reuters managerial editor (photography) described as an 'intellectual agreement':

> I mean the debate that Reuters had is because we believe in free speech, it would be very difficult for the company to say 'oh by the way you can't tweet that' because it completely goes against that. So what it is, is like an agreement between thinking people saying well you are a Reuters journalist and you have a responsibility to what you're saying. So you might have extreme political views, which Reuters allows you to have. You wouldn't want to be seen to be announcing those political views to the world because you're a Reuters journalist… you see what I mean so it's a balance, it's about, it's an intellectual agreement really. Does that make sense? *(I-28)*

Here it seems that the established GNA culture of practice was informing how newsworkers comport themselves beyond the borders of the organisation in the social media space. This was expressed not as a problem but as an "intellectual agreement" with two consenting sides. As shown in illustrations A and B, despite the many uses of social media

for newswork, activity on social media was most commonly *not directly related to news production.* But newsworkers stated that *much of this activity (directly and indirectly) informed their journalism* – this includes personal uses such as talking with friends and pursuing personal interests but also activities related to their role as a GNA journalist, which do not contribute in any direct cause-and-effect way to news production. These activities are referred to in Table 5 as 'extrinsic to the production process' and contribute to a trend of 'professional sociability', discussed in the following section.

7.7 'Professional Sociability'

Sociability refers to the quality or state of being sociable - characterised by or affording occasion for social engagement and conversation. Socialising with other users for both personal and professional purposes was a central use of so-called 'social' media by GNA newsworkers and is the broad practice which underpins the concept of 'professional sociability' employed here. Social media have become part of everyday life and work for some GNA newsworkers, permeating both personal and professional spheres. These newsworkers have developed and extended networks of contacts which cross between these arenas, maintaining relations with sources, audiences, colleagues, friends and family – all within the same social media spaces. To do this, they have had to deal with issues of collapsed contexts, blurred boundaries and unclear power relationships in a publicly visible domain. It is in this context that GNA newsworkers have developed what this thesis refers to as *professional sociability[61]:* a set of values and practices that guide them in negotiating ways of interacting on social media whilst ensuring they do not breach normative boundaries upheld by the GNA profession.

Many daily social media activities described by interviewees transcended the home-work boundary, bringing personal elements into their working activities and vice-versa, and unsettling the established terms of what is considered public/private. Whilst the researcher sought to find out how social media were used in newswork, interviewees consistently steered the discussion to the broader uses and practices, linked to, but not necessarily traditionally defined as, part of the news production process. In doing this, they refocused the object of study away from the traditionally defined news production process (as depicted

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[61] The term is not used here in the way that Phillips uses it – i.e. "the means of getting others to disseminate information via social networks" (2012: 669).

by the 5-stage model) to less clearly defined practices and processes at the margins of prescribed journalistic tasks. These seemingly marginal aspects of journalistic practice have often been obscured in previous scholarship that looks to research a narrowly defined set of standard news production techniques - accomplished in newsrooms, during work hours. Studies of social media practice such as this contribute to broadening empirical study beyond these limits and thus remedying this deficit, as these technologies cross work-play boundaries as well as the public-private divide.

7.7.1 Ambient Awareness and Listening

Newsworkers described the importance for their job of keeping up-to-date with their beat and maintaining an awareness of the broader journalistic field. Achieving this often requires commitment in their own time and social media had become one of the ways in which this can be incorporated into everyday life. Alfred Hermida argues that social media are ambient awareness systems that offer "diverse means to collect, communicate, share and display news and information in the periphery of a user's awareness" (2010a: 1). Newsworkers expressed this view when discussing the practice of monitoring their beat. A Reuters television manager explained:

> we monitor Twitter and various other things, Facebook for Iran, there was a load of stuff came out of Iran on it. … I mean we would use it as an awareness thing. *(I-30)*

Interviewees gave numerous examples of how this 'awareness system' has benefited their work. For instance, an AP Chief correspondent explained:

> A good example of when social media worked would be when an armed ethnic gang terrorized Lagos. No other agency had this story and the AP was able to get there first and get footage as I had seen a series of posts on Twitter about shooting in the area. *(I-23)*

These examples show newsworkers 'listening' to people on social media. Crawford suggests practices of listening as a metaphor for emerging modes of paying attention online

(2009: 525) and argues that participation in this context does not only mean contributing a 'voice', rather it can encompass witnessing the comments and activity of others. Listening to people through this ambient awareness system is an important practice contributing to professional sociability: it can widen the net of sources to include more non-institutional, non-elite, public voices. For example, a Reuters reporter recounted how he listened to activists on the ground in Burma whose posts tipped him off about acts of violence, which he followed up for a story:

> Recently, pro-Rohingya activists posted alarming Tweets about an alleged massacre of Rohingya. Some of that information turned out to be true. *(I-31)*

7.7.2 Identity Construction and Boundary Maintenance

GNA newsworkers have always been required to maintain (to some degree) their professional persona beyond the newsroom so as to afford their work the legitimacy it necessitates. Social media use has meant newsworkers have had to construct and maintain suitable professional/personal identities and in doing this, they have been co-opted into publicly engaging in boundary maintenance of the profession. An AP social media editor explained his belief in the need to be professionally sociable on social media:

> I think that as a journalist, if you're reaching out to people using social media, it doesn't tell them anything just to see someone churning out links to stories, they need to see that you're a real person and they can look at your social history and your social timeline and it build up an element of trust and I think that is really important. You wouldn't walk into a room with a paper bag over your head and expect someone to talk to you just like you wouldn't expect to have like a faceless Twitter profile and people to interact with you. Also… the way that small-talk is replicated in social networks is by posting about things that you've done personally as well and then people can see those, they can see that you're a real person. *(I-20)*

This quote demonstrates the rejection of solely work activity on the sites. It suggests newsworkers' co-option of social media conventions and practices, such as profile building

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and sharing personal information, with the aim of ensuring that the trust they rely on in to conduct their newswork is extended to the social media space. Much of the activity described by interviewees was an ambiguous work-play hybrid, commonly referred to in scholarship as 'immaterial labour' (Fuchs 2010, Hardt and Negri 2004: 108). For example, an AP reporter's comments illustrate how intertwined her personal and professional identity are and suggest that she believes GNA newsworkers using social media can benefit both journalism and society:

Social media should not be about merely repeating AP content. We have to enhance AP content and personalize what we stand for. People are in the end interested in other people. If you have the attitude of disinterest in other people's tweets and photos, you are missing the whole point of social media… Sometimes people you don't even know except through social media will offer emotional support in unexpected ways. It reminds us that we are connected, and that journalism not only depends on that but is also a way of giving back to this connectedness. *(I-24)*

Some newsworkers considered this kind of professional sociability to be a public good whereby engagement between GNA newsworkers and social media users is mutually beneficial. These 'professionally social' practices (outlined in Table 5) may suggest a new element of *transparency* in GNA newswork. Publicly requesting, soliciting, and sourcing on social media or 'working out loud' in the creation of a story (Bonneau 2013); distributing supplementary elements of news as well as the finished product; and publicly receiving feedback and discussing news output, allow the social media audience to see and engage with GNA news production as a process rather than only as a product. They used the technology's features for conversation to support an image of transparency and openness – whether this was borne out in their interactions or not. Transparency then may be a new value or ethical imperative that is increasingly considered important in the GNA culture of practice in order to shed light on the process of producing news for the benefit of the public. This said, it may equally be viewed as a marketing and promotion tool for the benefit of news agencies and newsworkers by which they 'sell' the *process* in addition to the product at no added cost to themselves except time, which the data suggests is often leisure time rather than the working day.

Many newsworkers included reference to their GNA in their social media profiles (as requested by the agencies if using them for anything work related). An AFP text journalist

explained her reasoning for combining the personal and professional in a single Twitter account but limiting reference to her agency so that she felt free enough to express herself as an individual as well as a newsworker:

> … where I work is a big part of my life and so having that in my Twitter bio explains why lots of my tweets are AFP-related. But I've chosen not to put AFP in my Twitter name, unlike a lot of other journalists who'll add "Sky" or "BBC" to the end of their Twitter names… I decided that it would feel a bit too much like saying AFP owns me… like saying I'm a mouthpiece for the agency or something. I obviously try not to bring the agency into disrepute with what I tweet, but I feel a bit freer to tweet funny/silly stuff if I don't have AFP in my name. *(I-3d)*

GNAs are training all staff in how to use social media and encouraging their use whilst social media practice is becoming an increasingly expected skill for GNA newsworkers. The notion of what it means to be a modern GNA journalist is changing to incorporate this but some scholars are critical of the implications it can have for the workforce. Newsworkers who engage in work-play on social media can be seen as 'free labourers' (Terranova 2000) in two ways: they are engaging in news production-related activity for GNAs outside of paid time; and they are freely creating user data on which social media rely to function, and from which the companies that run them profit.

7.8 Limitations: Obscuring Diversity and Overstating Use

It must be noted that there was a considerable diversity in responses related to reported uses of social media and perspectives/attitudes towards social media in news production. A limitation of this thesis is the inability to include full description or analysis of these myriad differences due to space and time constraints. It is also important to note that five of the newsworkers who declined to be interviewed did so not because they were unwilling to engage in the academic research process but because they felt that their lack of use and understanding of social media meant that they would not be useful for the study. This may be indicative of a limitation of the sampling technique whereby non-users or less confident users were self-selecting out of the research. Despite the researcher's efforts to

include these interviewees, this has arguably led to an underrepresentation of the views of non-users and may give an overstated impression of how widespread the use of social media is amongst GNA newsworkers. On a final note, agency-specific trends and anomalies have also been omitted with the aim of illuminating key themes across all three agencies. This has the effect of glossing over issues and themes that were particular to each news agency. However it is argued that the unifying factors of their shared GNA culture of practice was considerably more important in shaping social media use than the impact of their organisational differences.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates that use of social media has had a significant influence on news production and the culture of practice at GNAs for a selection of newsworkers. Some newsworkers are modifying news production infrastructure by co-opting social media with the rationale of updating GNAs methods of newsgathering and distribution and improving newsworker-public interaction. The findings also suggest that the wider culture of practice at GNAs may be altering as a result of the emerging practices and values related to social media use. Star and Bowker propose that "the most important thing is for the user of the infrastructure to first become aware of the social and political work that the infrastructure is doing and then seek ways to modify it (locally or globally) as need be" (2006: 242). Newsworkers are incorporating social media into existing news production infrastructure and in doing so, they are becoming increasingly aware of the actual and potential impacts of this action on the material and cultural elements of GNA news production. Conscious of the social and political role that their journalistic practice plays in society and the cultural norms, values and practices that inform this role, they are amending social media use to comply with the GNA culture of practice. Newsworkers however are also increasingly aware of their own potential to exert control over these technologies, shaping them and their impacts through use. Social media are thus contributing to a subtle adaptation, alteration and re-assertion of the GNA culture of practice, whilst being simultaneously shaped by it.

In attempting to describe and demarcate newsworkers' social media practice, it has become clear that the interplay of everyday social media practice and newswork is complexly intermeshed. The emergence of social media as both non-institutionalised sites for breaking, gathering and spreading news and as sites for general social interaction has led

to a more connected co-existence of GNA journalists and the public. This analysis of newsworkers' reporting of their social media practice indicates that one outcome of this co-existence is what this thesis terms 'professional sociability'. This encompasses the wide ranging activities that newsworkers engage in that have no direct, and immediately measurable outcome for their newswork but which are not unrelated to their journalistic role – i.e. that are not entirely 'professional' nor entirely 'personal/social'. Newsworkers engage in these activities in their own time and in work time, in their own homes/non-work environments and at work, enabled by the mobile and multi-platform features of social media technologies. No matter where, when, and how newsworkers use these technologies, they consider the professional implications of their activity. Whilst this has always been a consideration for journalists it has taken on a different importance and form. It is argued here that this can be interpreted as a form of professionalisation of newsworkers' social media practice.

Chapters 5 and 6 showed that social media have become integrated into existing GNA infrastructure for news production at an *organisational* level. This chapter provided an informed analysis of selected themes regarding *individual newsworkers'* use and understanding of social media. This in turn supports the broader discussion in Chapter 8 of the implications of transforming GNA infrastructure for GNA culture of practice, and builds towards the conclusions in Chapter 9. The following chapter presents a discussion of the impact of social media on GNAs, building on the findings from the three data analysis chapters and using the theoretical framework to interpret these results. It will focus on the implications of integration of social media technologies into the GNA socio-technical news production infrastructure and the changes to professional culture.

Chapter 8. Discussion

Reimagining Global News Agencies

8.1 Summary

This thesis has researched the role of social media in news production at global news agencies during a unique period of change and investigated how social media technologies are understood and used by GNA newsworkers. It suggested that in line with industry trends, the use of social media may be transforming GNA news production and culture. This discussion chapter pulls together the three sets of empirical research findings and critically analyses them using the cultures of practice theoretical framework and literature discussed in Chapter 2. It discusses what these findings mean for GNA journalism and concludes that in the process of incorporating social media, the GNA culture of practice has changed in specific ways. This is important as it represents change that is not solely technological, i.e. a practical 'change of tools for the same job'. Rather it is a complex, iterative, and evolutionary change of an abstracted set of norms and values in tandem with news production practice and process. Most notably this includes a new ethic of *professional sociability* based on *participation* as a key value. These two elements are expressed through, and arise from, *new* and *hybrid practices*, which are performed as GNAs and their newsworkers '*social network the news'*. The findings suggest changing notions of the GNA business model (see 8.8) and social role (see 8.9). The chapter argues that despite significant change to practices, the core principles and values of GNA journalism remain in an era of 'social' and network journalism - but it identifies additions to them and changing interpretations of them.

8.2 Introduction

This thesis set out to investigate the role of social media in news production at GNAs and the implications of their use for GNA journalism. It was researched over a unique and important period that took in adoption of, and adaption to, social media during which GNA Twitter and Facebook accounts were constructed and specialised guidelines were created for

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the first time. It aimed to explore how social media technologies are understood and used by individual newsworkers and by the agencies. The central findings of each stage of analysis must be considered in order to highlight their key contributions to answering this question and to identify the common themes that tie them together. Chapters 1 and 2 introduced GNA news production and use of social media technology as a vital nexus in need of further study and made the case for drawing key insights from sociology (of news production), science and technology studies, cultural studies and new media/social media studies to investigate the subject. Chapter 3 constructed the 'cultures of practice' theoretical framework to structure the subsequent analyses of news agencies' and newsworkers' use of social media. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 then applied this framework in their analysis to explain and interpret organisational and individual social media practice at GNAs. Each of the analysis chapters' findings described and explained ways in which the introduction of social media technologies into GNA socio-technical news production infrastructure has impacted news production (in terms of newsgathering, communication and distribution) and newsworkers (in terms of their understandings and activities).

Chapter 5 found that from an organisational standpoint, GNAs were taking a traditional approach to activity on social media: the flow of information on Twitter and Facebook was largely a one-way channel out from the organisation, which mostly followed a prescriptive and familiar formula of news distribution. The GNA culture of practice was however found to have subtly changed to incorporate connective and sharing practices as well as limited interactive engagement with online audiences/SNS users. The analysis of organisational guidelines in Chapter 6 concluded that global news agencies were utilising a 'competing cultures' frame to shape newsworkers' use of social media. This frame depicted social media as engendering a culture of practice that clashes with that of GNA journalism and competes with it for precedence in newsworkers' perception and performance of their work. The chapter argued that GNAs are using social media guidelines as an infrastructural tool to shape newsworkers' use and understandings of social media; encouraging them to apply established GNA norms and values to social media practice rather than accepting the prevailing cultural practices related to social media. The findings suggest that at an organisational level, new conceptions of journalistic professionalism may be emerging as a result of the negotiation between these two culturally distinct arenas of practice. For example, practices that may have previously been considered 'unprofessional' or 'pushing the boundaries' of accepted practice had become approved and standardised through the guidelines in a way that aligned them sufficiently with established norms. By framing the social media practices that were endorsed as being based on traditional GNA principles,

GNAs were renegotiating their shared notions of professionalism and 'normalising' social media in journalism practice. This was a form of boundary work to renegotiate and rearticulate the GNA journalistic role and its legitimacy. Chapter 7 concluded that social media are a boundary tool for newsworkers in both practical and conceptual terms: these technologies acted as a bridge to the public at the input and output stages in which news is gathered and published and represented an arena for re-negotiation of the meaning of GNA journalism. The chapter found that newsworkers have developed an ethic of 'professional sociability', which values and promotes participation and helps them structure interaction on social media whilst ensuring they do not breach normative boundaries upheld by GNA journalism.

This chapter draws the thesis's three sets of empirical findings together and critically analyses them using the cultures of practice framework and the body of literature discussed in Chapter 2. When considered holistically, the results of this thesis's tripartite analysis contributed to several findings, which were not apparent when considering each chapter's conclusions separately and which must be further discussed. Together, these findings suggest that the introduction of social media has altered the GNA culture of practice and that a level of cultural consensus is emerging about the role of social media at GNAs and the role of GNAs in a network journalism ecology. Several processes have contributed to this: GNAs are *social networking the news,* valuing *participation* and *transparency,* and developing an *ethic of professional sociability,* in which *social value* is important. This is contributing to transformation of the GNA business model and evolution of GNAs' social role. Building from these insights, this chapter interrogates and discusses what these findings mean for GNA journalism. This discussion ultimately forms the basis of the conclusions detailed in Chapter 9. But first, the chapter explains the role that the cultures of practice theoretical framework has played in the research and the key insights it has generated, particularly concerning the mechanisms and dynamics of change at GNAs.

8.3 Cultures of Practice: Highlighting Components and Dynamics of Change

This thesis's cultures of practice theoretical framework was key to enabling analysis of the nexus of theory and practice, normative ideals and pragmatic application, and conflict and compromise as they occur in the pursuit of GNA news production. The framework operationalised the concepts of a) cultures of practice, b) infrastructure, and c) architecture

and affordance, from a mutual shaping perspective (see Chapter 3). The framework focused attention on the relationship between technology and culture in news production. It shed light on how social media technologies as part of infrastructures serve to shape newsworkers' actions, with technologies 'pushing back' on actors through materiality and the cultures of practice their architecture supports - but also how human agency manifests and changes. Using the cultures of practice framework as an analytical lens enabled examination of the intersection of architecture and affordances of social media with the infrastructure of GNA news production (of which they are now a part), thus allowing rigorous interrogation of how these technologies shape GNA practices and culture (and vice-versa, in a process of mutual shaping).

Importantly, the use of this framework helped reveal the components and relationships at the heart of processes of change at GNAs. In particular, the research found that GNAs' and newsworkers' co-option of social media comprised important additions and alterations to the following five distinct areas:

- *GNA technological artefacts* (integrating social media software, social workflow tools such as TweetDeck, and promoting hardware such as social media-friendly smartphones);
- *GNA workforce structure* (creating new units/departments and jobs related to social media, re-defining existing job roles and training newsworkers);
- *GNA policy and guidance* (creating social media-specific guidelines)
- *GNA news production practices* (extending traditional practices and developing hybrid and new social media-related practices) and;
- *GNA production process* (adding social media as a boundary tool for external communication in newsgathering and distribution);

By identifying these individual elements as central to the transformations going on at GNAs and analysing their influence on news production, this research has been able to describe and explain how their aggregate impact has been subtle but fundamental change to the GNA culture of practice. Each of the above findings illustrates a component part of how social media have been co-opted into infrastructure and how this has shaped practices and processes. In addition to this, analysis using the cultures of practice framework has illustrated the dynamics by which social media (pre-existing technologies with their associated

architecture, infrastructure and culture of practice) have been incorporated within an existing news production system (with its own sociotechnical infrastructure and established culture of practice). It has shown that this process has been fundamentally disruptive. It highlighted how individual newsworkers and their organisations seek to manage and rationalise changing practices and cultural norms and values in order to maintain the authority and legitimacy of their profession. The research explained how efforts to structure, organise and co-opt social media artefacts and cultural practice into the GNA infrastructure and culture of practice have been both top-down and bottom-up. It supports the argument that the boundaries of the distinct genre of GNA journalism are being redrawn at the level of both individual newsworkers and of the industry sector more broadly.

Importantly, the research finds that in order to manage the process of co-opting social media, practices for their use have been designed for backward compatibility with the GNA culture of practice to ensure they don't distort or undermine fundamental principles and ethics. The framework enabled explanation of how this played out in a traditionally hierarchical news organisation that wants to maintain control over production and content. As Lewis identified, the "professional logic of control over content" exerted by GNAs is in tension with the open participation afforded by the architectures of the digital and networked technologies they are using (2012: 836). This tension manifests in the news production process: the social media culture of practice has disrupted the relationship in GNAs between a well-established set of ideals, theoretical tenets, and values and their associated set of practices and routines. Social media threatens GNAs' ability to control access to news by providing an alternative platform for people to break news, on which raw and unverified material and accounts of events can emerge immediately after (and with livestreaming at times even during) events, unhindered by processes of verification and contextualisation. But social media also offer value in drumming up interest in breaking news and driving the audience to their coverage (either directly or for example through a client broadcaster) (Paterson 2010: 110-111) and newsworkers recognise this tension. Disruption has in turn encouraged adaptation but also entrenchment.

Social networks - as in the people with whom one shares a social relationship - have always been central to journalism, shaping not only who a journalist/news organisation's sources are and what input they provide but also who their audiences are. Social media have changed these networks by solidifying and formalising them in a persistent digital format for newsworkers. In this context, they represent a new 'porous' part of the institutional 'membrane' that affords the in-out flow of news and information and the maintenance and visualisation of social connection. By incorporating social media into infrastructure, GNAs

are normalising these networks and legitimising them as professionally accepted and valued news production technologies. Huberman, Romero and Wu (2009) talk about 'networks that matter' pointing out that people default to interacting with those few that matter to them. In order to understand meaningful interaction in a social network they argue that the hidden social network needs to be found. Newsworkers' contacts among the general population were exactly that – a hidden network that contributed (alongside institutional and official sources) to GNA journalism. With this in mind, the findings from Chapters 5 and 7 suggest that 'ordinary people' are now being incorporated into the GNA 'network that matters' through their normalisation within the infrastructure.

This research finds that in an era of social media and network journalism, in which methods of social interaction have changed, the core ethics and values of GNA journalism remain. However it identifies additions to them and changing interpretations of them. This includes a new ethic of professional sociability (discussed further in 8.7) based on transparency and participation as important new values. These additions and modifications to values feed into changing notions of the GNA business model (see 8.8) and social role (see 8.9). They represent an important part of how the GNA culture of practice is changing through evolution of the abstract and sometimes theoretical concepts that underpin it. Importantly, these changing principles are inseparable from changing practices: they are not only *cause*, but also *process* and *result* of newsworkers' changing practices. GNA newsworkers are engaging in new and different actions for journalistic work (and in their personal time) using the digital and networked affordances of social media: they are *social networking the news*. Thus the body of everyday, practical journalistic tasks is also transforming through an iterative and co-constitutive relationship with the abstracted set of GNA values and principles.

It is important to note that the dynamics of change are not unidirectional. As social media transform GNA journalism, they are also being transformed in a process of mutual shaping, but to a lesser degree. For example, GNAs are shaping the socio-technical context of use and the infrastructure of the social media technology by enabling and constraining newsworkers' social media practice with new rules, amended techniques and cultural cues. In this way, GNAs are shaping social media. Moreover from a broader and more long-term view, GNA use of social media - along with that of other journalists and news organisations - is feeding back into the design process of these technologies. For example, it has prompted Twitter and Facebook to design features useful for journalists (Twitter n.d.) and guides such as 'Twitter for Newsrooms' (Ehrlich 2011; Twitter n.d.), even hiring journalists to develop their news strategy (e.g. Facebook hiring Wall Street Journal Editor Liz Heron (Wagner

2014)). However as the focus of this research is not the shaping of technology, the following discussion hones in on the way social media are shaping GNA journalism.

8.4 Social Networking the News

Each analysis chapter illustrated a different facet of how social media have been instrumental in recent developments to GNA news production processes. The findings suggest that in addition to existing practices, GNAs and their newsworkers are now *social networking the news*: they are gathering and distributing news using these technologies and the digital and networked practices they afford. As part of incorporating social media into the existing socio-technical infrastructure, they have co-opted elements of the culture of practice associated with their use, including open participation by the public/audience, interactivity, connecting and sharing. However social media use appears to simultaneously modify and reinforce GNA newsworkers' traditional norms and practices – a trend found in other traditional journalistic contexts (Artwick 2013; Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012; Deuze and Marjoribanks 2009).

A pivotal conceptual shift for GNAs and their newsworkers underpins this social media activity: conducting newswork *directly for the public,* in a *publicly visible manner.* Social media afford a direct route for GNA communication with the public - the intended audience for their journalism - without the mediation of a client news organisation (though social media represent a new mediator). The simple practice of publishing news directly to the public - at only a minor delay to that distributed to clients on the wires - represents an important foray into retail news publishing and indicates a new role for GNAs in the journalism ecology (for more on this, see 8.8 and 8.9). Social media afford the persistence, archiving, scaling and searching of traces of connection, action and interaction. As such, GNA newsworkers and their connections to each other and their organisation are more visible than ever before. Some of their interaction with sources and audiences is conducted openly on these platforms and social media as intermediaries shape how they communicate. Social networking the news however does not entail an entirely new process. New technologies were made to work with existing infrastructure and once incorporated, wrestled with the "inertia of the installed base", inheriting both its strengths and limitations (Star and Ruhleder 1996: 113). In order to minimise the uptake of what are deemed limitations, processes for social networking the news have been designed for backward compatibility

with the GNA culture of practice to ensure they don't distort or undermine fundamental principles and ethics.

The empirical data in Chapter 5 shows GNAs are *social networking the news* on an organisational level, and Chapter 7 shows many newsworkers are doing this on an individual level. But analysing these findings together shows there are very clear differences to these two approaches. GNA strategy for organisational accounts has been to play it safe and co-opt social media into existing ways of working, with little compromise - GNAs were strongly regulating and consciously normalising social media. Newsworkers however were less prescriptive and experimented more freely with social media's many-to-many model that affords its 'networked audience' avenues for multi-way communication (Marwick and boyd 2010: 16). Recognising that there are clear limits to the extent and importance of social media in GNA news production, findings indicate that these technologies are the focal point of a process of reconsideration and renegotiation of the GNA culture of practice. The necessity for cultural negotiation between the distinct GNA and social media interpretive cultures of practice urges newsworkers to favour or construct norms and practices that resonate with the tacit knowledge and understandings of both. Three genres of social media activity were used to achieve this cultural negotiation: the *transfer of journalistic conventions* to the social media space; the development of *hybrid conventions and practices;* and *the application of new practices* in GNA journalism. Social media practice was thus characterised by *the old, the hybrid, and the new.*

8.4.1 The Old: Transferring Journalistic Conventions

This category represents practice that shows no significant conceptual change from pre-existing ways of working and directly applies traditional conventions to the social media environment. This was most clear on GNA organisational accounts, which followed a rather rigid set of practices that were in-keeping with existing ways of working. GNA accounts used familiar conventions of applying headlines, slugs, captions and credits to posts; they made minimal or no editorial changes to content from their wires before posting it; linked almost exclusively to their own content; and promoted only themselves. GNAs were not sharing other news organisations' or journalists' content and only AFP was directing online traffic to its clients (see Chapter 5). Singer (2005) and Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton (2012) similarly found that despite experimenting with a participatory form of communication,

traditional functions were prominent in relation to blogging and micro-blogging respectively. GNA practices of linking to their own newsroom content and not engaging in two-way dialogue with other social media users despite the networked audience afforded by Twitter and Facebook shows a continued conceptualisation of journalism as product, also found amongst newspaper reporters (Artwick 2013). They engaged in very little retweeting/reposting or quoting and when it was done, it was of other proprietary or professional (e.g. client) accounts. GNAs' professional imperative for control over content necessitated putting external material 'through the GNA filter' to ensure their own standards of verification, context and interpretation. The ensuing stream of familiar professionally produced news implies GNAs are adhering to conventions of "lecture by professional authorities" (Artwick 2013: 212) essentially "telling the public what it should know" through their own content (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2010: 175). As organisations, GNAs were using social media primarily as a mass distribution channel and tool for self-promotion - a pattern found in other studies of major news organisations (Broersma and Graham 2012, Canter 2013, Hermida et al. 2011; Holcomb, Gross, and Mitchell 2011). They displayed some connective and sharing practices, e.g. retweeting, modifying tweets, embedding links to other accounts (see 5.5) but they were barely interacting with SNS users – another trend found more broadly, e.g. among local US television stations (Greer and Ferguson 2011). This is an important finding because it counters the technologically deterministic narrative that use of social media by news organisations automatically engenders greater connectivity and interactivity with the audience and encourages participation.

Individual newsworkers' social media use was also in part characterised by traditional journalistic conventions but in contrast to GNAs this pertained more to their newsgathering practices than to distribution. The direct transference of existing practices was common, for example newsworkers would recreate on social media the networks of people and organisations they were already monitoring through pre-existing means. Newsworkers also saw social media largely as a new tool to accomplish existing newsgathering tasks such as monitoring, targeted seeking and contacting people (see 7.6) and tweaked their existing practices to make this work. When applying existing practices didn't satisfy established norms, newsworkers would try to move away from social media and revert to tried and tested methods and technologies. For instance, newsworkers' accounts of UGC verification practices show that they prefer to fall back on contacting sources using more familiar forms of communication (phone, face-to-face etc.), thus moving away from social media as soon as possible in the verification process. Although newsworkers were increasingly using social media, their treatment of it as a method of last resort shows the

limits to which it has been accepted as a news production technology. Most newsworkers did not value social media-sourced UGC highly and it was almost unanimously considered to be a less desirable substitute for professionally produced content. This was despite feedback from clients that UGC was increasingly popular (see 7.7.1). Many were not confident at verifying UGC and so preferred practice was to turn to it only as a last resort. This wariness of social media shows individual newsworkers' awareness of the mediating impact of the technology on content and interaction with other people.

Newsworkers remained committed to GNA professional norms and values when using social media. This commitment, for instance to providing "objective fact" in search of "truth" relies on rational methods of ascertaining these things, which tried and tested practices have heretofore provided. But newsworkers' role as "fact" collectors was challenged by the huge mix of types of information and genres of communication on social media where fact, opinion, news, entertainment, hoaxes, jokes etc., all sit side-by-side. The complications of then applying a verification procedure in this environment - which also affords user anonymity and misrepresentation - was a further challenge. As such newsworkers had to develop new *rational methods* to satisfy this norm; this led to *hybrid* and *new* practices.

8.4.2 The Hybrid: Merging Conventions and Practices

This category represents practice that involves a merging of GNA-specific and social media-specific ways of working. The creation of hybrid conventions involved operationalising perceived affordances and capitalising on elements of social media practice whilst simultaneously normalising this new media form to fit old norms and practices (Singer 2005: 173). This is illustrated by GNA organisational accounts' *connective and sharing* activity, in which SNS functions and conventions of practice were hybridised with journalistic conventions. For example, instead of simply adding the name of the individual newsworker(s) who authored the content being posted on social media, e.g. a traditional credit, GNA accounts used *hyperlinked credits* that embedded a link to their social media profile. GNAs also merged the traditional convention of using slug words to categorise content with the social media convention of hashtagging content so that it can be grouped together across the network to create *hashtagged slugs.* These hybrid practices largely supported visible connections between internal networks of GNA newsworkers and content

and barely extended to include external networks. The manner in which GNAs were normalising Twitter and Facebook to fit existing professional norms and practices (Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012; Singer 2005) illustrated their prioritisation of GNA cultural convention over innovation and experimentation.

For newsworkers, hybrid conventions and practices were constructed as ways to consolidate what they saw - and were encouraged to see by GNA guidelines - as two conflicting cultures of practice. Newsworkers perceived a number of varied affordances of social media technologies but as was clear in Chapter 7, they only considered certain possibilities for action to be salient or appropriate for them. This is because they viewed their social media practice through a well-established lens of GNA professionalism (see 2.3.3). In this way they only operationalised certain affordances of social media in their day-to-day journalism and did so in a manner they deemed commensurate with GNA professionalism. The social media practices that could be amended to work with GNA values were perceived by newsworkers as valid. Practices that have always been central to GNA (or any type of) journalism took on hybrid forms. Findings show that newsworkers are now also listening, monitoring, and seeking out information and UGC on social media. This involves modified practices, for example, newsworkers that would have visited physical locations to listen to the vox populi now (also) listened to the ambient noise of the social network (Hermida 2010a; 2010b), scanning it for nuggets of useful or newsworthy information, merging past practices with new methods. Crawford suggests practices of listening as a metaphor for emerging modes of paying attention online (2009: 525) and argues that participation in this context does not only mean contributing a 'voice', rather it can encompass witnessing the comments and activity of others. For GNA newsworkers listening is a core social media practice. Monitoring and seeking - by dipping in and out of social media information streams with a focus on certain topics and by creating alerts to flag up pertinent information - have become important for supplementing institutional flows of information and offering alternative sources and types of content.

8.4.3 The New: Applying Novel Practices

Social media was used as a self-publishing platform and tool for newsworkers to publish their work and GNA content to their networks thus acting as a new and additional outlet for their agency. Whilst distributing GNA news was a traditional practice for the

agencies (see 8.4.1), it was a novel practice for individual newsworkers who prior to having social media accounts, had very few avenues for self-publishing and distributing their agency's news. Newsworkers meanwhile distributed links not only to their own work and GNA content by posting, 'retweeting', 'favouriting', 'liking' etc., but also linked to content generated outside their GNA, e.g. from the public or other news organisations. This illustrates newsworkers' deviating from professional conventions by "opening the gates" somewhat to non-professional participants (Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012). It suggests what Kovach and Rosentiel call a "smart aggregator" function of sharing "sources they rely on, the stories they find illuminating, the information that informed them," (2010: 180). Self-publishing and "smart aggregation" of others' material are new practices for GNA journalists and are built on connective or "sharing" conventions that are fundamental to the social media culture of practice. Discussing and interpreting the news with members of the audience in a publicly visible and archived form was also a new practice for many newsworkers.

Unlike GNAs hyperlinking practices, newsworkers' accounts of their activity showed that hyperlinks were used not only to distribute information but as a form of communal activity. Holton et al. describe this as seeking "information by soliciting reciprocal linking from other users" (2014: 33). Kovach and Rosenstiel's idea of "next journalism," (2010: 175) - a journalism of service that values public dialogue – may be in evidence here as newsworkers were posting the process of journalistic work, re-posting citizen voices, and linking to a broader journalism ecology that includes the public. Though the degree of interaction with other users on social media varied widely among individual newsworkers, they were more likely to interact with other users than GNA organisational accounts were. This was a trend also identified by An et al. (2011) who found that among the 80 media sources analysed on Twitter, journalists were five times more likely than organisations to respond to mentions posted by other users. The cohort of newsworkers who were using social media clearly perceived these technologies as affording a new way to interact with the public: an interface for connecting across the boundary of the GNA. This is an important finding because they are redefining their - and by extension their GNA's relationship - with the audience.

GNA organisational accounts used a number of social media conventions, which break from traditional ways of working. For example, they sometimes employed an *informal style of address,* which would be out of place on other GNA platforms but which is common on these networks where interpersonal communication that mirrors the spoken word is the norm. To a limited extent, GNAs operationalised the affordances to create, search and traverse networks, and to take persistent content and replicate it or make it more visible

across networks. They did this by *retweeting, modifying tweets, embedding links to other accounts (e.g. @ mention/embedded hypertext), making lists and favourites, using hashtags, 'Likes', 'Shares' and other automated social plug-ins.* Revealingly, the connections and networks they made and engaged with were largely internal, i.e. of their own newsworkers and other organisational accounts, and the content they shared was their own. So on the one hand GNAs were engaging in the aforementioned 'new' practices and this created a 'new' representation of the organisation that is visible to the public and affords engagement with social media users. But on the other hand what they were accomplishing with these practices commonly reinforced an existing model of publication, extended established branding and marketing, and supported connections within an existing network.

The practices and processes of *social networking the news* illustrate the role of social media technologies as new 'intermediaries' between GNA journalists and the variety of people with whom they engage (audience members, sources, competitors and colleagues, as well as peers, friends and family etc.) The intermediating functions of social media are shaping not only practices but also norms, values and principles as the following section explains.

8.5 Participation and Transparency: From Practices to Principles

Newsworkers have incorporated two values that are notably prevalent on social media: *participation* and *transparency*. The former involves recognising the worth of enabling open participation by the public whilst the latter involves recognising the importance of providing an account of, and accountability regarding, how they conduct their newswork. These values are not entirely new and have been found to have growing importance across the news industry (Bunz 2010b) but they are now more highly prioritised than before social media entered news production practice and appear more highly valued by those that partake in this type of 'social newswork'. They are however *not* core principles and are not recognised across the board of newsworkers. Rather they are ascendant values that are influencing existing norms and creating norms that newsworkers exhibited in both practices and professed attitudes.

Focussing on the growing importance of transparency and participation is a useful way to explain how social media use appears to simultaneously modify and reinforce GNAs' and newsworkers' traditional values, norms and practices. Chapters 6 and 7 suggest that in

an era of social media and network journalism, the core principles of GNA journalism persist: speed, objectivity, impartiality, neutrality, accuracy and reliability remain key normative standards referred to by GNA journalists when using social media. However, the methods of reaching these standards have changed and arguably that which qualifies as satisfying them has also altered. This dynamic can be explained by explicating how transparency and participation manifest in contemporary news production practice.

Transparency has become an important value on an organisational level for GNAs when dealing with social media and UGC. For instance, GNAs are required do the utmost to confirm the validity of UGC and reliability of social media contacts that provide information. However traditional verification procedures cannot always be fully satisfied in these online networked environments and time and resource constraints can prohibit the necessary processes. In these cases – and if the information is deemed newsworthy enough - then GNAs rely on being transparent to clients about the limitations of verification by providing detailed disclaimers (see 6.8.4 and 7.6.2). Maintaining the high levels of verification that traditional 'official' sources and methods of sourcing enable is not always possible in these conditions so GNAs are being more transparent as a way to compensate. This demonstrates a reassertion of the central importance of the traditional norms of attaining accuracy and reliability but also a modification of expectations as to what steps are realistic and necessary to respect those norms. Newsworkers were quick to point out that third party material had always been treated this way but this practice has become more widespread and significant in tandem with the growing amount of UGC entering GNA intake of information. This is important because GNAs are "'keeping the gates' for gatekeepers" (Whitney and Becker 1982) so any change in their processes impacts a chain of others in the news ecology who rely on the efficacy of GNAs' production processes. Transparency in this context does not make news any more reliable or accurate (though it can improve speed) but this method provides an account of the measures taken and a record of the agency's awareness of their limitations - and as such underpins their claims to legitimacy and trustworthiness. In doing this, GNAs are shifting the onus of responsibility for final vetting prior to publication onto clients (who it should be noted, often take GNA material as fully vetted and don't replicate agency disclaimers for the audience).

Transparency is also visible at an individual level as some newsworkers are also increasingly providing public accounts of their working processes by publishing information on social media about their work as they do it. This provides a sort of record of their working process due to the persistence of digital traces and social media's capacity to publicly archive digital data. But it also fulfils a social function: 'talking' to users who may be 'listening' -

i.e. paying attention online (Crawford 2009) - and encouraging a reciprocity or dialogue. By viewing transparency as a quality that engenders trust and actively pursuing transparent practices, newsworkers are bucking the GNA trend for veiling their work in order to remain behind the scenes and are now at the forefront of GNA public visibility and engagement. In this way, transparency links strongly with the other ascendant value: participation.

Participation of members of the public is central to the functioning of journalism, particularly in their role as sources, news makers and audience. But incorporation of social media has instigated a re-imagining and re-articulation of public participation for GNAs, which has in some ways disrupted the status quo and upset the balance of power in the GNA/newsworker-public relationship. As Chapter 7 showed, newsworkers are increasingly valuing the practices that these technologies afford for audience participation; they are willing for users to make suggestions, provide UGC, discuss and interpret the news agenda through social media. In this way, their use of these technologies is enhancing connections between GNAs and the communities they serve. For example, the act of *listening* to people through this ambient awareness system is now an important professional social media practice (see 7.8.1). Though it may sound fairly inactive and unlike a work task, it represents a fundamental form of participation through witnessing and paying attention to the activity of others (Crawford 2009: 525). It necessitates filtering and digesting information and often leads to storing, cataloguing, sharing or otherwise utilising this information to inform news production. Newsworkers expressed a recognition of 'social value' in these participatory practices. Newsworkers already have very effective streams of information from official sources through press releases, wires, journalists' relationships with sources etc., but social media have added a new link with the public for gathering non-institutional news. Listening on social media can widen the net of sources for GNA journalists to include more non-institutional, non-elite voices as it provides an alternative interface with the social world outside the newsroom (though it must be noted that this research did not measure the extent of this).

As social media break down barriers of time and space, newsworkers could more easily locate and contact these potential sources in real time on a global scale and integrate their input into the news. In this way, as newsworkers were experimenting with social media, they were altering their own and their organisations' interpretation of acceptable methods for newsgathering and publishing. The explanations and defence of their social media practice elicited through this research's interviews demonstrated newsworkers' active engagement in boundary maintenance of their profession (Lewis 2012). For example, non-professionally produced content was becoming much more accepted as newsworthy,

meaning that content of a much lower technical 'quality' (e.g. images produced by equipment that is not industry standard) was making up a larger proportion of agency output. Newsworkers have revised their conceptions of what constitutes content that is of a publishable standard in order to accommodate UGC and remain in line with changing societal and client expectations. The relationship between social media users and the platforms to which they upload UGC is characterised by a form of tacit participation in their networks (whether recognised or not by the user), which gives certain permissions to social media companies to use this content. This agreement is what underpins the new forms of participation in GNA news production discussed here.

A cautionary note is however necessary at this point, explaining that - as was evident in Chapter 7 - newsworkers are not a homogeneous group and that a minority of the workforce was engaging with social media for newswork at the time of research, so the impact of participatory practices arguably remains limited. It seems that aside from an increased acceptance of low quality, raw, eye-witness images and video, that which GNAs deem newsworthy remains largely driven by previously established perspectives and conventions. Restrictions on participation seem to be infrastructural and cultural: longstanding newsroom structures, demanding work routines and tightly held professional beliefs allowed for limited experimentation in this field, in this case hindering development of participatory practices. There was unwillingness amongst some newsworkers - both journalists and managers - to open up the news production process to external actors. Paulussen and Ugille (2008) also found this and argue that "cautiousness and resistance among journalists is not just a matter of professional conservatism, but it should be understood in the broader context of work practices, daily routines, organisational structures and role perceptions in the newsroom" (ibid: 25). Moreover, on social media the agencies were even less likely than individual newsworkers to "relinquish their gatekeeping role by sharing their stage with other news gatherers and commentators" (Lasorsa, Lewis and Holton 2012: 19).

With this caveat in mind, the following discussion considers the broader implications of *social networking the news* and integrating *transparency* and *participation* into news work.

8.6 The Changing (Inter)Face of GNAs

Social media are a new (inter)face for GNAs. They enable an official, coherent organisational representation of the agency and a more diverse, fragmented representation of its component parts and people. The former has been important in raising the public profile of news agencies and their brand of reliable, accurate, timely, objective news. The latter has been important in personalising GNAs. An interesting outcome of the growth in social media use at GNAs is that individual newsworkers are an increasingly visible factor in GNA journalism. Newsworkers are now at the 'digital interface' of the GNA as it operates in a digital and network journalism environment. The online visibility of newsworkers at the agency interface creates an access point, which social media users and the public can recognise and through which they can interact. Their presence propels GNAs into the public domain in a new way and places newsworkers at the forefront. Their newswork (what they do) and news content (what they produce) is now persistent, archived, scalable and searchable in new ways. Knight and Cook describe this change as one from individual journalists who were "subsumed by their institutions, and their output was constrained by the conventions and technology of the organisation within which they worked" to those "in direct contact with audiences, and with more options than ever as to where they source or output their work" (2013: 236). Social media accounts were in theory personal, with no direct oversight by the GNAs, however in practice newsworkers were expected to operate within the boundaries of what GNAs consider appropriate behaviour and could be reprimanded if this was breached. Accordingly, GNAs used infrastructural tools such as guidelines to shape newsworkers' perceptions of the affordances of these technologies and in turn this shaped their use of them.

GNAs were shown to have encouraged individual newsworkers to construct their own social media profiles and use them in a variety of ways to contribute to their journalism (Chapter 6). Importantly, this has resulted in increased online visibility of GNAs as a source of journalism for the general public by providing a new type of personal or social interface. It has also placed more power in the hands of individual newsworkers not only to negotiate the boundaries of their news work but to shape the public's perception of global news agencies. As the GNAs highlight in their guidelines, social media afford direct interaction of newsworkers with the public without the filter of an editor or a client that has previously been in place. What were once ephemeral exclamations, interactions and conversations made over private communication networks (face-to-face, telephone, email etc.,) are in part now being made publicly on social media. Individual newsworkers can be held to account for

their publicly visible actions due to the archived and searchable nature of social media activity. This increases the level of responsibility for newsworkers to act in a manner that doesn't compromise their professional role in their own estimation, that of the GNA and that of the public/audience. It also serves to personalise GNAs for the public, revealing the people behind the organisation and providing for the first time a social expression of the GNA. Newsworkers were shown to be sensitive to their new role in this (see for example 7.8-7.8.2) - some relishing the opportunity whilst others downplayed it. It is argued here that the concept of *professional sociability* is helpful for explaining this process of personalisation of the GNA profession as well as the professionalisation of social media practice in newswork.

8.7 An Ethic of Professional Sociability

Chapter 7 identified social media as non-institutionalised sites for breaking, gathering and spreading news and sites for general social interaction, which have led to a more connected co-existence of GNA journalists and the public and increased the likelihood, and altered the nature of, newsworker-public interaction. In this way, use of social media has been the driving force of development by newsworkers of what this thesis terms an *ethic of 'professional sociability'*. By using social media and developing norms and practices in relation to that use, newsworkers were precipitating a change in their own and their agency's interpretation of what it means to be 'professional' in digital and networked journalism. Alongside and in response to this, GNAs were embedding this ethic into organisation-wide (and in turn, industry-wide) guidance.

The *ethic of professional sociability* is normative in that it proposes that connection, engagement and interaction with the public is good for GNA journalism and suggests a moral imperative to achieve this. It is built on the view that participation and transparency can contribute positively to the GNA culture of practice and create *social value*. This draws from the central logic of social interaction and 'sharing' on which social media cultures of practice are predicated. Crucially though, this *sociability* is only appreciated when enacted by newsworkers in a manner that adheres to the pre-existing set of GNA values. Thus it is modified through the lens of *GNA professionalism.* Notions of GNA professionalism become meaningful through practice and discursive constructions. They were perceptible to the researcher as they permeated both newsworkers' social media activity and their own

evaluation of their practices. Revers argues that constructions of boundaries "are always performative, whether in writing, action or speech" (Revers 2014: 40). This ethic of professional sociability has developed as a way to perform - through description and enactment - a culturally acceptable form of social media practice for newswork (and beyond). In this way, newsworkers were renegotiating with each other and with their GNA what it means to be a professional GNA journalist.

Chapter 6 showed how the new systems of 'social' news production have been designed for backward compatibility – social media practice has been forced to fit in with existing ways of working; it has been normalised. As such, newsworkers have had to square pragmatic, everyday social media practices with quite rigid and abstract professional frameworks. To do this they have constructed rational explanations and arguments for their new practices, some of which as we have seen have been formalised as an addition to organisational infrastructure in the guidelines (see 6.4-6.9) whilst others are tacit understandings shared amongst the social media-using cohort of newsworkers (7.3-7.9). Professionalisation in this sense is a process of rationalising social media practice by referring back to the core existing GNA norms and values that legitimise established practice. In the case of GNAs (as organisations) this process involved first outlining how these two cultures clashed and then demonstrating how they could be made to converge without threatening the orthodoxy of GNA journalism. They did this through instruction (guidelines), training, reward and punishment but also by example (through constructing and maintaining organisational social media accounts).

In the case of newsworkers, professionalisation meant experimenting and hybridising practice whilst developing culturally acceptable justifications for their actions. A good example of this relates to UGC. Newsworkers were reluctant to recognise any changing practice as a lowering of standards and proposed rational arguments for it. For instance, the more compelling the UGC, the more likely it was to be included without identification of its original source or certainty of its reliability and this was legitimised by using disclaimers (see 7.7.3). Prior to the explosion of UGC online and on social media, this was uncommon practice (as most content would have originated either from the agency itself or other news organisations). Newsworkers rationalised this practice by referring back to their instinct and skills as journalists to make editorial judgements on veracity and reliability and by relying on the convention of using disclaimers. The act of UGC creation by an 'active public' coupled with the act of sharing this UGC on social media sites has clearly altered newsgathering. This is because social media afford a) the identification and viewing of this UGC and b) a method for contacting the person who shared it and potentially the creator and

c) assessing the veracity of the content and background, agenda and reliability of the source. In this small way, the 'active public' were having more say in what the agencies published - but only on the agencies' terms: newsworkers still provided a professional stamp of approval and a contextual framing.

For newsworkers on social media, GNA professional identity was not only relevant during work but was extended to online profiles and everyday social media interaction (see 7.8). In some ways, GNA journalists in this context were never 'off the job' – they were making a sacrifice in their personal lives so as not to compromise their professional integrity and expressed this as a demonstration of their professionalism in a social media environment. As an ethic that underpinned social media practice, a tacit adherence to professional sociability facilitated the permeation of professionalism into the personal sphere. But it also blurred the boundaries of newswork. The ethic was embedded not only in the newsroom but in the activities with no direct or immediately measurable outcome for newswork such as listening and monitoring – i.e. those that are not entirely 'professional' nor entirely 'personal/social'. Newsworkers engaged in them in their own time and in work time, in their own homes/non-work environments and at work, enabled by the mobile and multi-platform features of social media technologies. Importantly, no matter where, when, or how newsworkers used these technologies, this ethical imperative urged them to consider the professional implications of their activity. Thus they were redrawing the boundaries of GNA newswork to include social interaction on social media as a beneficial practice.

Similarly, managerial and specialist staff who have constructed the agencies' official organisational social media presence have had to renegotiate and rearticulate what GNAs are in this new environment, e.g. their service, business model, brand, social role etc. The following sections discuss what this thesis identifies as the central changes this boundary work has engendered.

8.8 Connecting with the Public… and Bending the Business Model

What then is GNA journalism in an age of social media and network journalism? Firstly, it is no longer defined purely as wholesaler to the news industry. As outlined in Chapter 2 (2.2-2.3.4), before online platforms and social media, GNAs were largely behind-the-scenes news organisations with little visible presence for much of the audience they reached. Their mechanisms for interaction with non-clientele was limited and largely private

(phone, email, letter) with few features for public interaction developing in the last two decades (primarily web page comments). Their news was primarily available through client news organisations with a selection accessible on their web page from the early to mid-1990s[62]. Each GNA pursued different online strategies, for example Paterson explains how from around 2002 Reuters went into competition with its subscribers by becoming an online news service that marketed directly to the consumer and provided branded stories to aggregators while AP largely remained tied to the subscription model and only provided links to its content on its website through the websites of member newspapers, thus protecting the print media which own it (2007: 61). AP appears to have moved towards the Reuters model in its social media linking practices whilst AFP is the only agency with a strategy that seeks to minimise direct competition by sharing a large proportion of links in social media posts with client websites. This may be reflective of AFP's different funding model and public remit related to its partial funding through government subsidy, which was previewed in 2014 to increase by 3.3% (AFP 2014).

In recognition of the high level of distributive power of social media, Siapera (2013) argues that rather than a 'democracy of distribution', there is an increased concentration of distributive power in the hands of a select group of platform 'infomediaries' in the journalism ecology, including search engines and social media. GNAs and their newsworkers appear to be taking account of this altered power dynamic and transforming the GNA operating model by incorporating social media as a distributor. As a result, provision to the public (or in business terms, the consumer) has taken on an increased importance. This amounts to an alteration of the GNA business model: although the wholesaler-retail client relationship remains the core business relationship underpinning GNA journalism, the GNA-public relationship has grown and transformed in synchronicity with the development of social media as a journalistic (and personal) tool. There are now two prongs to their operations - client and public - and the tension between the two is not yet resolved (see 7.7.5 for newsworkers and managers voicing this). GNAs are moving into a dual-product market using social media, combining the pre-existing audience/content market - in the past achieved only through clients but now also through social media mediators - with an advertising/attention market (Trappel 2012).

An important characteristic of GNA use of social media platforms is that news is provided at no cost and the return that they gain is not financial in any directly measurable way. Though there have been recent attempts to directly monetise these platforms using

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[62] For example, Reuters.com was registered in 1993, Reuters.co.uk in 1996, and afp.com in 1991.

advertising (AP 2013a), the agencies saw value in their use for marketing, improving brand recognition, and building reputation, trust and reliance on their journalism (see Chapter 5). As previously outlined (see 2.3.3), reputation and trust are particularly central to success for GNAs in a social media ecology and the agencies' strategy was to extend their hard-won position in the legacy media environment to social media. To this end, they have built organisational social media profiles that are familiar in style to the type of news they already provided: they largely serve to distribute snippets of news and links to GNA content, promote GNA activity and in a very minimal way, respond to the public/audience (see Chapter 5).

These social media accounts serve as an official *interface* between the organisation and the public. Although GNAs are only one of many news providers on social media (rivalled not only by other news organisations but by a multitude of other users), they maintain an institutional position in social media spaces. Findings suggest GNAs are strategically developing a new market that may in future be made profitable. But more importantly, they are a) establishing their importance as a key node in the (social media) news network, thus extending their dominance as an international news provider into this influential digital space and b) reinforcing their position in the current intra-industry market through ensuring the public's recognition of, respect for, and in turn demand for, their news. For Boyd-Barrett, this ability to transition their business model to a "business-to-business-to-consumer or even a direct business-to-consumer model" is the primary reason for their survival in the Internet era (2010: 13).

A paradox currently characterises the position of GNAs – they are ever more influential in original international news provision as rivals in this field (particularly newspapers in recent years but formerly also television news) cut back on global newsgathering due to loss in advertising revenue and their struggle to stabilise feasible business models. But GNAs are themselves feeling the pinch of the downturn experienced by their clients and thus need to explore new options to ensure their future relevance and viability. This foray into using (potentially) participatory media platforms such as social media is as much representative of their perception of social media spaces as commercial ecologies embedded in capitalist structures that can provide a new revenue source or way to bolster existing business relationships, as of their desire to evolve their interaction with an 'active audience' or fulfil journalism's stated democratic mission to inform the public. The GNA approach to social media thus also embodies a paradox in that social media simultaneously represent: a space for extension of dominant forces in the journalism sphere and commodification of their power and authority; and a new space for public/audience participation in the news

production process and for civic engagement. GNAs are using social media to create a new relationship with the audience. At the same time, the relationship between GNAs and their clients has also changed in this context and is better defined as that of competitor-colleagues. Their relationship is also becoming more visible to the audience through public displays of connection such as links and credits added to social media posts, lists of 'friends', 'followers/following', 'favourites' etc., that can be traversed by others. This exposes the flow of content from GNA to retail client in a way that problematises the illusion of originality for which the client traditionally paid.

8.9 Seeking Professional Authority in a Social Space: An Emerging Social Role

GNAs are seeking to extend professional authority to an environment which is premised upon open participation. Building from an awareness of news and information abundance on social media combined with the understanding that consumers do not value all sources of news equally, GNAs are strategically positioning themselves as *key nodes in the social media news network*. Their desired role in this environment, where accurate news and information sits alongside misinformation and disinformation, is that of trusted verifier and purveyor of reliable news. In a network journalism ecology, an important commodity is attention as all users compete for visibility (Ellison and boyd 2013). As the amount and speed of news reporting has increased via digitally-networked technologies, the role of GNAs has shifted. They may no longer be the fastest node in the global journalism network at breaking certain types of news, which instead often surface through social media[63], but they are gearing their infrastructure towards being the most reliable at verifying and passing on that news in a social media sphere – not only to clients but now also to the global public. Newman found this move from breaking news to "being the best at verifying and curating it" at other news organisations (2009: 2). Though their role in being the first to surface news is clearly reduced, they remain a key player in providing the *vetted version* of this breaking news to a mass audience, via the journalism sphere (through the usual organisational subscription route) and to a general audience (now through social media in addition to via retail clients).

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[63] E.g. major events are well covered by GNAs, but disasters and unplanned events will often be first reported through social media by witnesses. Longstanding links with official newsmakers such as governments and companies mean GNAs still often lead in breaking these types of stories but social media often break news about community issues, which gain visibility and traction through social channels before reaching GNA attention.

They also see their role as one of "adding value" to raw information by contextualising and explaining it. GNAs and their newsworkers are negotiating and articulating a role as experts with the ability to contextualise the piecemeal information that circulates in the social media sphere for their clients, including by debunking false information, verifying and passing on UGC or highlighting the unverifiable nature of UGC and adding caveats for use, and linking to their own articles for more extensive coverage. GNA newsworkers showed no real concern that social media were challenging their expertise in creating, filtering, and distributing news and information aside from the acknowledgement that social media were leading in the area of breaking news. They saw GNA professional identity and authority as being linked to reliability, trustworthiness, and quality and sought to extend these values and their own jurisdiction into the social media space.

The value of speed is as important as it ever was but whereas on social media, most users prioritise the speed of accessing and sharing raw, unfiltered information, GNAs value the speed of transforming that raw information into verified and contextualised news and then sharing it (i.e. putting it through established news production processes that meet agency standards before distributing it as news – a more time consuming process). As such, when their organisational accounts add a 'BREAKING' slug to tweets, they are indicating not that they have just gathered this information and passed it on but that they have verified the information before distributing it. This also indicates that they will follow it up with a story that provides more context. This particular approach to breaking news is in place for several reasons, firstly because they trade on their reputation for verified and reliable news, which cannot compete in terms of speed with rumour and unverified information and secondly because they have a duty to provide their paying clients with breaking news before sharing it with non-paying consumers through social media (and indeed their own websites), which causes a necessary delay in breaking news on this platform. The concept of speed recognised in social media cultures has in this way been normalised to fit the GNA culture of practice. This is just one example of the high level of oversight and a clear set of professional practices that govern GNA social media activity, which limits certain possibilities (e.g. how timely or interactive they are) but also ensures that they pose little risk to GNA reputation.

GNAs relied on a relative scarcity of information for their position and purpose but this has turned to abundance, with amateur content producers producing, repurposing and sharing information and content around the world. In response, GNAs are reimagining the industry model. They are reasserting their traditional expertise but also finding a language with which to communicate their value when challenged by the ubiquity of news and

information. As such the one-way, top-down "we write, you read" brand of GNA journalism (Deuze, 2003: 220) remains - particularly at an organisational level - but now sits alongside a more open-door 'we listen, incorporate, and respond' approach – particularly at the level of individual newsworkers. GNAs are in this way bolstering the tacit agreement between them and the public that they should continue to be a key player in handling gatekeeping (collection, shaping, and distribution) in both traditional mass media and novel digital and networked news environments. They are doing so by asserting the value of their proven capability to curate, vet, contextualise and deliver news in the social media system whilst also facilitating some elements of participation. The GNA culture of practice has in this way evolved to tolerate and increased level of engagement and participation from the public but crucially it has retained much of its professional logic of control over content and process.

At this point it is important to highlight the limits to the extent of social media use so as not to overstate their role at GNAs. For the agencies, social media are just one of many platforms for delivery, tools for newsgathering and methods for communicating with people outside of the organisation. For most GNA newsworkers, they remain an additional technology, used largely on an ad hoc basis. The level of value and priority accorded to social media for completing journalistic tasks differed greatly between newsworkers. There were no clear standardised routines across the cohort of interviewees and practice changed over time (see Chapters 5 and 7). This all suggests social media practices are not replacing existing practices but are supplementing them and values that underpin these practices are not supplanting those at the core of GNA journalism, rather they are adding to or modifying them.

8.10 Conclusion

This thesis hypothesised that in line with industry trends, the use of social media may be transforming GNA news production and culture. This research has shown that social media are now part of GNA news production infrastructure and the possibilities for action that they afford have been instrumental in shaping new production practices as well as shared cultural norms and values. The contemporary characterisation of GNA journalism is increasingly engaged with the real-time, ambient and always-on (Hermida 2010a; 2010b) digital news environment in which technologies and their infrastructures afford interactivity and participation. This has certainly given rise to both challenge and opportunity (Braun and

Gillespie 2011) and this thesis - recognising the importance of grounded case studies for moving beyond normative debates about social media and the future of journalism - has considered how far and how deeply this has changed GNA journalism. The chapter concludes that though GNAs are clearly still in the midst of transition, there have been significant shifts in newsroom culture and practice toward a more participatory model of production and a more public/audience-focused role in the journalism ecology. Social media are not fully integrated or stable in GNA infrastructure but they have ascending importance for news production and their use has become a crucial arena for the renegotiation of GNA professionalism. A new ethic of professional sociability based on participation has become a key value is shaping GNA newswork and is manifesting through, and arising from, new and hybrid practices as GNAs and their newsworkers 'social network the news'. Although at the time this research was conducted these transformations were limited to a proportionally small cohort of newsworkers and impacted a relatively small extent of the news production process, it is argued here that their impact has been surprisingly large.

The following conclusion chapter draws together and reiterates the principal findings of this thesis, highlighting the original contribution to knowledge and suggesting avenues for future research. It reflects on the usefulness of the cultures of practice theoretical framework.

Chapter 9. Conclusion

Social Media @ Global News Agencies

This chapter is divided into five sections. It begins with a review of the principal findings and original contributions of this thesis, followed by a brief outline of key insights that underpin them. The chapter then discusses what these findings suggest about GNA journalism and its future in relation to its culture of practice and professional boundaries. It then reflects on the strengths and limitations of this research and points to fruitful areas for further study. Finally, the chapter closes by highlighting the significance of the key findings and their implications for the research agenda in Journalism Studies and related disciplines.

9.1 Introduction: Key Findings

The purpose of this research was to answer the question: *What is the role of social media in news production at global news agencies and what are the implications of their use for GNA journalism?*

The research aimed to: elucidate social media practice in news production at GNAs on an organisational and individual level; identify and explicate the framing of social media by GNAs; explore the understandings and perceptions of social media by newsworkers and analyse the relationship between GNA professional culture of practice and newsworkers' use and perceptions of social media. In line with the stated objectives (see 4.2.1), the research achieved these aims, firstly by critically analysing the intersection of journalism, news agency, science and technology, and social media studies (Chapter 2) and then using this as a basis to develop a pertinent theoretical framework (i.e. cultures of practice) for analysing social media in news production (see Chapter 3). It then examined organisational use of social media by conducting an analysis of GNA social network site activity on Twitter and Facebook (Chapter 5) and interrogated how GNAs frame social media through qualitative framing analysis of GNA social media guidelines (Chapter 6). By observing and interviewing newsworkers, the thesis then recorded and explained their use and understandings of social media in news production, analysing their described interaction with social media and identifying both systematic patterns of use and irregular use (Chapter 7). When considered together and using the theoretical lens of the cultures of practice, these

analyses then enabled discussion of the implications of GNAs incorporating social media into the news production infrastructure (Chapter 8) that support the following conclusions about contemporary GNA journalism and suggestions about its future directions. The thesis's hypothesis that the use of social media may be transforming GNA news production and culture was validated.

Principal Findings

1. The key finding this thesis presents is that social media have contributed in specific ways to a transformation of GNA journalism.

   a. The research finds evidence of a developing ethic of professional sociability manifest in:
      i. *newsworkers' journalistic practice and;*
      ii. *GNA organisational practice.*

   b. Social media practice has been instrumental in the re-articulation of the GNA:
      i. *relationship with the public;*
      ii. *business model;*
      iii. *role in the journalism ecology*

2. The research has shown professional cultures of practice to be a valuable analytical lens for studying technological change in news production contexts. It enabled effective study of the relationship between (social media) technology, (news production) practice and (GNA) culture.

The following section presents the key findings of this thesis that warrant particular emphasis in this conclusion. The primary research question outlined above was broken down into three sub-questions in order to structure data collection and analysis. Empirical findings that answer these questions were derived from the three sets of rich qualitative data presented and analysed in Chapters 5-7: the first sub-question pertained to GNAs' social media activity on their primary SNS accounts; the second to GNA guidelines on the use of social media; the third to newsworkers' described uses of social media. Chapter 8 then analysed these findings together and discussed what they indicate about contemporary GNA journalism and

its future directions. The data analysis and discussion chapters map onto these questions as shown in the table below.

Table 6: Table of research questions and related chapters

1. What characterises social media practice in GNA news production?	Chapters 5, 7
1a) How do GNA newsworkers use and understand social media?	Chapter 7
1b) How do GNAs as organisations use social media?	Chapters 5, 6
2. How do GNAs shape newsworkers' use and understandings of social media?	Chapter 6
3. What are the implications of GNA social media practice for GNA journalism?	Chapter 8

9.2 Social Media and the Transformation of GNA Journalism

GNA journalism is transforming. There are many different factors that are contributing to this evolution - both external such as the changing shape of the social, economic and political environments in which GNAs function and the journalism and media industries they inhabit, and internal such as changing service provision, workforce structure, and technology. The introduction of social media into news production is a change that has been occurring across news organisations around the world during the period in which this research was conducted. This research argues it is having significant impacts on journalistic practices and values at GNAs and is contributing in the following specific ways to a transformation of GNA journalism.

a) Professional Sociability in Practice

GNA journalism now incorporates what this research describes as an *ethic of professional sociability*. This ethic indicates an understanding of members of the public as more than just consumers/audience for the news product, foregrounding their importance in the news production process more broadly. Public participation is more highly valued in his context, for example in providing information and UGC, 'sharing', and interpreting news and so is transparency (of process and practice). This sociability is 'professional' because it incorporates an acknowledged responsibility to ensure GNA social media practice does not transgress professional norms and values. The research finds evidence of this developing ethic of professional sociability manifest in i) newsworkers' journalistic practice and ii) GNA organisational practice.

There is significant evidence that this ethic is shaping news production practice amongst newsworkers who use social media. It is also manifest – though to a lesser degree and in different ways - at an organisational level in GNA social media activity and in GNA internal guidelines. In this context, shared notions of what constitutes GNA professionalism are being challenged, renegotiated and rearticulated by newsworkers, through using and discussing social media, but also by managers, through organisational documentation, training and oversight of social media. Both newsworkers and managers are seeking to cultivate social media literacy for the benefit of news production and in the process they are redrawing the boundaries of GNA journalism.

i) Newsworkers' Changing Journalistic Practice: Valuing Participation

Newsworkers using social media viewed the participation of others (i.e. those outside of the GNA and particularly non-professionals such as members of the public) as an increasingly useful and important value in the news production process. They had developed a set of social media practices for use in news work (and beyond) that reflected this appreciation of interaction with other users and the part their participation played in the journalistic process (see Table 5 in Chapter 7). This indicates a key change from viewing the public almost exclusively as either passive audience or witnesses, sources, and subjects of what the GNA has already determined to be newsworthy, to valuing them as active participants in the creation of news with a role in suggesting, gathering, interpreting/feeding back and distributing news. Some social media practice thus made a tentative step towards opening up stages of the production process to social media users. These social media practices were varied; some of them represented very little deviation from traditional ways of working whilst others operationalised more of the novel opportunities afforded by social

media technology, representing either a hybridisation with existing practices or creation of new ones.

Though GNA newsworkers have always interacted with the public to gather news (e.g. in the field or from the newsroom face-to-face, via phone, email etc.), this research shows that their method and manner of interacting has changed with use of social media. For example, they can now speak to many people at once and quickly identify useful people with whom they had no prior connection - or locate relevant content using social media's display of network connections (amongst myriad other practices). And for newsworkers whose role does not involve newsgathering of this kind (e.g. multimedia newsworkers who re-version and package existing news, desk-based journalists, or managers), social media enabled them to also engage and interact with the public by distributing and discussing the news. This had led to a newfound recognition of the key role being played by social media users (and broader audiences online) to spread GNA news.

Newsworkers were learning to work within the constraints and possibilities of the new mediated architecture (boyd 2010) that social media present, which was interpreted through the familiar GNA culture of practice that presents its own constraints and opportunities. In this way, a cohort of GNA newsworkers were routinely 'social networking the news' and in doing so, they were altering the rhetorical and actual boundaries of their professional roles. However, this was only a cohort of the wider workforce and without more comprehensive data it is unclear how widespread this trend is. The fact that several interviewees turned down involvement in this research because they didn't use social media illustrates that this study represents only a part of the bigger picture, even if – as it is argued here - these trends are having an impact on the wider culture at GNAs. Although social media were certainly being co-opted into the news production process, they were clearly not fully integrated and were used largely in an ad hoc manner dependent on individual newsworkers' highly varied preferences and capabilities and shaped by their roles and local contexts. GNA efforts to turn this ad-hoc social media use to more routine and self-aware practice was however evident in guidelines, training and daily operations (see in particular Chapter 6).

Chapter 7 showed that social media acted as a bridge for newsworkers allowing two-way communication traffic with the public, particularly at the input and output stages of news production when news is gathered and published. Just as the physical architecture of a bridge influences the flow of traffic, so the architecture(s) of social media shaped the communication and activity between newsworkers and users. Architecture(s) afforded creation of a publicly visible presence of previously behind-the-scenes GNA newsworkers and a mapping of their connections and activities whilst associated cultures of sharing

encouraged newsworkers to interact with other users in relation to their journalism. The chapter concluded that social media represent a *boundary tool* for newsworkers in the practical sense of breaching traditional institutional borders but also in conceptual terms as they represented a key arena for re-negotiation of the meaning of GNA journalism - and with it the boundaries of the profession - in a digital and networked era. Newsworkers managed their activity on social media so as to ensure they did not breach normative boundaries upheld by GNA journalism but in the process of doing this, they justified and normalised practices and values that challenged the established culture of practice.

Newsworkers had been habituated to a way of working that has in recent years been challenged by social media and their associated cultural practices. In the contemporary context - a reality they are iteratively co-constructing - some things have remained relatively constant over time, such as the abstract notions of closely held professional norms and values. But in everyday practice, how these norms and values translate into action and interaction is changing. That which only a few years ago was considered useless, impractical or incompatible with GNA news work has through the actions of a disparate assortment of newsworkers and a growing organisational effort become incorporated into news production. In altering the technologies they use for news production by co-opting social media whilst continuing to subscribe to longstanding GNA professional norms and values, newsworkers are having to negotiate a tension between professional control and open participation (Lewis 2012). To do this they are providing what they see as professionally acceptable options for reconciling this tension by hybridising practices (see 5.7.2, 8.4.2) and legitimising these practices in rhetorical explanations and organisational documentation (see 6.8). In this way, social media are becoming normalised into the GNA culture of practice.

ii) GNA Practice: Traditional Distribution and Superficial Engagement

In contrast to newsworkers' more experimental use of social media, the organisational approach to using social media in news production was in the main rather traditional. On the two SNSs analysed (Twitter and Facebook), GNA activity followed a familiar pattern of broadcast media in which the flow of information was largely a one-way channel out from the organisation, which mostly followed a prescriptive formula of news distribution. Chapter 5 showed that this approach allowed for only superficial interactivity with other social media users. It was clearly not primarily focused on enabling members of the public to participate in the news process, with the exception of providing a space for

users to access and comment on the agencies' posts. However the simple act of creating a presence on social media indicates GNAs refocusing of some of their resources towards deliberately engaging the public and indicates a reimagining of their professional boundaries to incorporate news provision direct to the public in digital and networked social media spaces. This challenges their traditional business-to-business model and puts them in direct competition with their clients for attention in social media spaces. To a lesser extent, Chapter 5 showed evidence of some connective and sharing practices as well as a small amount of interactive engagement with online audiences/SNS users. This is important in the GNA context as there have previously been very few avenues for this kind of relationship with the public. Even the limited amount of interaction found in this research signals a closer relationship with the (social media-using sector of the) public than was maintained previously. GNA activity clearly represented more of a branding and marketing exercise than a deliberate attempt to develop the kind of professional sociability evident amongst newsworkers but whether intentioned or accidental, it has led to the creation of a sustained location for GNA-public connections to take place.

GNAs were also active in shaping newsworkers' understandings and use of social media. Their most significant development in this regard was the creation of specific guidelines as an infrastructural tool aimed at shaping newsworkers' social media practice so as to ensure that long-held professional norms and values continue to be maintained. The findings of a framing analysis of these guidelines in Chapter 6 suggest that new conceptions of journalistic professionalism may be emerging as a result of the negotiation between the culturally distinct arenas of social media and GNA practice. Practices that may have previously been considered 'unprofessional' or 'pushing the boundaries' of accepted practice had become approved and standardised through the guidelines. This was done by aligning social media practices sufficiently with established norms and framing these endorsed practices as being based on traditional GNA principles. As such, GNAs were renegotiating their shared notions of professionalism and 'normalising' social media in journalism practice. The guidelines showed that developing GNA approved social media practices was an organisational priority. Framing analysis highlighted the key elements of the GNA professional culture of practice that influence newsworkers' choices when using social media. It concluded that GNAs were utilising a 'competing cultures' frame that depicted social media as engendering a culture of practice that clashes with that of GNA journalism and competes with it for precedence in newsworkers' perception and performance of their work. The guidelines encouraged newsworkers to filter social media

practice through the lens of established GNA norms and values rather than accepting the prevailing cultural practices related to social media.

Together, these findings illustrate a subtle overall change in the GNA culture of practice. They illustrate how GNA news production culture and practice is being shaped by the architecture and affordances of social media and the mediated environment they support (whilst at the same time pushing back on those technologies). Understanding these changes is vital for understanding global news agencies in the contemporary network journalism environment.

b) Reimagining and Rearticulating the GNA Profession

This thesis argues that GNA social media practice has been instrumental in the re-articulation of i) the relationship GNAs have with the public, ii) their business model and iii) the role they play in the journalism ecology. As discussed in the previous section, it has shifted professional culture towards more engagement with external actors, more transparency in their operations and towards valuing public participation in elements of news production. It is argued here that a level of cultural consensus is emerging and is stabilising the role of social media at GNAs. In the technological utopianism that characterises much industry and academic discussion (Gillmor 2004), particularly of the impact of social media (Hirst 2012), new technologies are often seen as causing revolutionary change. However this research indicates that change in GNA journalism has been *incremental* and that transformations are being built on and anchored in the existing base. In this context there is much that remains familiar and stable in the GNA profession - but it is crucial to take account of the accumulated impact of incremental and iterative changes that have occurred in relation to social media. The following findings take stock of the current situation for GNAs – an important exercise for what it can indicate about potential future directions for the agencies.

i) The Invisible Giants Emerge: Connecting with a Networked Public

Though this research found limited use of the potentials for interaction by the agencies (see 5.8) and ad-hoc, varied use by individual newsworkers who still largely see social media as a last resort (see 7.6.2), it is argued that the overall impact of social media

use for GNAs is considerable. This research suggests that social media will be a crucial part of their future news production processes. Use of social media by newsworkers and GNAs means a highly increased public visibility for both individual newsworkers and the agencies as news organisations. A contributing factor - and result - of this is that GNAs and their newsworkers are now engaging with (the social media literate sector of) the public. Furthermore, they are engaging with a reconfigured public: a networked public (boyd 2010). Social media are the key set of technologies through which this relationship is being played out and the digital and networked architecture that supports them is shaping newsworkers' actions and interactions. The recording and archiving of users' expressions in a digital form by social media make them persistent and replicable, whilst the networked structure makes them scalable (having high potential visibility) and searchable (boyd 2010: 46). These affordances are supporting a continuous, often two-way, GNA-public relationship in a way that was never before possible. This is due to social media affording a stable representation of the GNA as a continued point of reference for the public (through account profiles – see 5.3, 5.4), and a medium for potential connection and interaction that facilitates communication and the exchange of data.

Social media are having an impact across the whole news industry but their role in changing the relationship with the public is particularly significant for agencies – more so than for client-facing news organisations. Firstly, this is because there were previously very few ways for GNAs to get feedback from their audience due to their hidden role behind clients, and social media have opened up a relatively direct path for feedback, interpretation and discussion. This research showed newsworkers responding to this feedback and valuing the contribution of social media users for their work (see 7.6, 7.8). Secondly, this low profile meant they were never the first port of call for the public to go to with news but top-down and grassroots efforts to co-opt social media and build a 'social profile' have bolstered this relationship (see 7.6, 7.6.2). Much like Hermida describes social media, the GNAs are 'ambient' and 'always on' (2010a; 2010b) - perpetually looking for content and information to syndicate. Social media networks mirror the global, dispersed and constant nature of GNA news and GNAs are thus taking advantage of them to communicate with users, discover relevant information, and gather content from users around the world (see Table 5). They are also now strategically using social media to extend and enhance their brand of news and market themselves directly to the public, leveraging their history as reliable frontline newsgatherers to attract a social media audience (see 5.6). As such, they are now firmly in the public eye.

For GNA newsworkers, social media represent another gate to guard - an additional source of raw material through which information flows into the GNA news production process and an additional point for them to manage what flows out of the organisation. But this comes with an element of collaboration with social media users, thus technically providing a space for non-professionals to provide input into news production. Information flow is regulated according to norms, values and practices that are highly reflective of those used to 'guard' the gates in the pre-digital and networked era. However values and practices associated with open participation and transparency that are prioritised in the culture surrounding social media now also influence the gatekeeping process (see 7.8.2, 8.5). GNAs maintain their gatekeeping authority in this environment but have subtly changed their methods. As such they have both reinforced and subverted their role as gatekeepers (Coddington and Holton 2013). Social media users are playing an increasingly influential role as active participants in newsgathering and distribution/sharing but this has been a largely symbolic 'opening of the gates' for GNAs who have themselves extended their role as 'professional gatekeepers' into this otherwise 'non-professional' arena.

ii) A Business Model in Transition: Social Media as Mediator

GNA use of social media for distributing news represents a pivotal shift in their operational model towards provision of news a) directly to the public and b) for no direct financial recompense. Though GNA websites have catered for direct-to-audience news distribution for some time, the expansion onto social media is an important shift for the business model. This is because it shows GNA efforts to attract a wider audience directly to their journalism and extend the recognition of their brand beyond the news industry into the public imagination, which puts them in direct competition with many of their clients. Though the traditional business model of selling subscriptions remains the main source of revenue, a tension now characterises GNA operational goals, which is yet to be resolved. This is recognised by newsworkers who expressed concern about the impact of these changes on the viability of their business (see 7.7.4). However there is little indication that this is currently impacting the GNA business negatively – in fact as client news organisations cut staff to reduce operating costs in their digital transition, they rely more heavily on agencies. As Currah points out, they are "an increasingly critical element of the digital transition as they provide access to a trusted and geographically extensive newsgathering operation, which is adept at generating text, video and photography" (2009: 59).

Direct publication to the audience is however in many ways not so 'direct'. Social media represent a new mediator in the news production process and in using these platforms, GNAs are ceding some control over content, for example how it is displayed and distributed. This is an area that would benefit from more investigation than was possible in this thesis. Though social media companies do not pay GNAs for news as traditional media clients do, they reap the benefits of attracting an audience through hosting the GNAs genre of high quality journalism. They can then profit from this audience in two ways for financial gain: by selling their attention to advertisers and by selling their data to third parties. GNAs meanwhile get a platform for newsgathering, communication and distribution, which supports novel practices and facilitates exposure to a new audience. This research finds that because the aims, goals and priorities of GNAs differ from those of social media companies, there is a tension inherent in the use of social media by newsworkers. The cultures of practice theoretical framework helps to explain this by elucidating how the architectures of social media and the infrastructure of GNAs reflect their respective priorities and work to engender cultures of practice that are appropriate to their context. As social media have become a mediator between GNAs and the public, there has been a pressure for GNAs and newsworkers to conform to their associated technical and cultural requirements and expectations. This research covers a transition period during which social media were incrementally co-opted into GNAs and during this period, negotiating the pressure to conform whilst maintaining core norms and values was the primary challenge. One of the most notable outcomes of this negotiation has been a degree of acceptance by GNAs of the social media logic of 'sharing' content without being paid for it. Each GNA had a slightly different approach - AFP for example deliberately shared social media traffic with their clients whilst AP and Reuters did not – but they all had in common the effort to attract a social media audience and extend their brand recognition into the public imagination. Moreover, this 'sharing' culture extends to their perception of social media users who GNAs now view as sources for sharing newsworthy material[64].

iii) Carving out a New Role in a Networked Journalism Ecology

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[64] The convention here is to pay a nominal fee for UGC even if it is provided without request for payment so as to ensure a contract between the UGC provider and GNA – so this is not 'for free' per se.

In this new environment in which GNAs provide news directly to social media users and maintain connections with them, GNAs are taking on a different role in the journalism ecology. Once hidden, they now have a public persona and are creating a social role for themselves that reflects the values they have always held but which prioritises generating a form of public value through their services on social media. They aim to be a key node in the network - an exchange service which now provides not only GNA produced news content and that of affiliated professional organisations but also UGC and provides it not only to clients but also to the public. They are branding themselves as professional verifiers and trustworthy purveyors of objective news in a social media space that hosts huge amounts of opinion and misinformation. Though these changes are only recent and not yet fully formed, it is clear that GNAs will play an important role in news distribution and verification in the digital and social environment. They have already quickly developed a strong position in terms of readers and will aim to use this to amplify their reach. Moreover, their increasing expertise in social media use means they will be better able to leverage the benefits of these networks in future. GNAs want to use their reputation as trustworthy and thorough to be the favoured source that users rely on to check whether rumours are true and seek out reliable and up-to-date news. They are building on their traditions of fact-checking at speed and maximising the use of their long-established global networks to gain a foothold as a key node in the network. Thus their overall social role is changing.

The theoretical framework of professional cultures of practice has provided a unique lens for analysing social media at global news agencies by operationalising the concepts of a) cultures of practice, b) infrastructure and c) architectures and affordances, from a mutual shaping perspective. The following section explains the continuing value of this original contribution.

9.3 Cultures of Practice: a Valuable Theoretical Framework

This thesis contributes to the field of Journalism Studies by providing a fruitful and innovative theoretical framework for the study of new technology in news production which could be utilised by other researchers of journalism. Moreover, the framework could be employed to study technological change in other academic fields such as sociology or business studies to investigate different organisations and professions. The framework

constructed and applied in this research offers an original analytical approach formulated from a particular synthesis of existing ideas. Building from a sociological approach to the study of news production, the research drew together concepts from Journalism Studies, Cultural Studies, and Science and Technology Studies to develop a unique theoretical framework of cultures of practice. This framework was then used to examine social media practice in GNA journalism. However, the framework has broader potential to be applied in the study of the role of technology for change in other professions as well as in journalism. Conducting research using the cultures of practice framework could be useful in Journalism Studies to investigate other legacy news organisations and examine how they are being shaped by 'new' media technologies in relation to their practices, values and relationships with the public/audiences/users. It could also inform studies of technology that seek to situate practice in context and aid technologists to understand the practicalities of new technologies in journalism contexts in terms of the implications for news production practice and organisation.

The framework proposes that professions are built around a shared culture of practice constituted through common practices, processes, norms and values. Any culture of practice is underpinned by a socio-technical infrastructure and the introduction of a new technology changes this infrastructure, in turn shaping the culture of practice with implications for the profession. Technologies are composed of specific sociomaterial architectures that give rise to opportunities for action or 'affordances' that are not inherent in the technology but are relational to context. This framework posits that examining the intersection of the architectures and affordances of a technology (in this case social media) with the infrastructure of an organisation and/or profession (in this case GNAs) enables the researcher to a) identify and b) analyse the mechanisms through which the broader culture of practice may be changing. In doing this, the ways in which a culture of practice and associated profession are evolving may be better understood and explained. This approach facilitates analysis of how social media technologies are shaping GNA practices, norms and values but it also enables interrogation of how the GNA culture of practice pushes back on the technology in a process of mutual shaping. Without assigning a causal relationship or dismissing human agency, this approach recognises how social media technologies as part of news production infrastructures serve to shape newsworkers' actions and interactions, with their architecture 'pushing back' on actors through materiality and abstract cultural constructs.

Social media practice in GNA news production is important because it is in this area of newswork that the central tension between established and new cultures of practice is

being negotiated. The outcome of these negotiations will shape the future of GNA journalism. GNAs' influence in the global journalism industry is particularly relevant because of their role as wholesaler and trusted 'gatekeeper for the gatekeepers'. Their approach to the challenges of social media and the associated ethic of open participation shapes the news that circulates and sets standards within the industry. The case of GNAs also matters for what it suggests about how traditional and professional news organisations built on a one-to-many broadcast model are transforming in a digital and networked media ecology. The cultures of practice framework ensured a research focus on the tangible alterations to infrastructure as well as more abstract rhetorical constructions. It elucidated how GNAs and newsworkers are innovating and re-drawing professional boundaries whilst simultaneously re-articulating the value of their established expertise through practical and rhetorical mechanisms. The analysis in this thesis highlights how social media are raising important questions regarding the continued maintenance of editorial standards and editorial control at GNAs. It suggests that though accepted forms of social media practice may be stabilising and solutions to cultural tensions found, the process of co-opting these technologies into news production is incremental and iterative and will continue for some time.

9.4 Reflection

The strength of this thesis lies in its tackling of one of the most important phenomena in journalism today - the rise of digital and networked media, and particularly social media - in one of the most important sectors of the news industry - that of global news agencies. Very little academic research has investigated the GNA production context, particularly in the era since the advent of digitisation. Moreover, none has endeavoured to research social media at the 'Big Three' leading news agencies despite their recognised importance for the nature of global news and standards in the industry. A small number of studies have since the start of this research published new research on news agencies (Czarniawska 2011, Greissner 2012) but they have not addressed the gaps identified in this thesis, including empirically analysing GNA social media practices and using advances in new media theory to analyse social media at GNAs. Contributing a new theoretical approach, this thesis has begun the process of opening up the 'black box' of how social media (as technical artefacts) have been brought into use in GNA newswork and how they shaped (and are shaped by) newsworkers, their production process and culture of practice. Building from a mutual

shaping perspective enabled this research to focus on how newswork took shape in a socio-technical setting (Overdijk et al. 2012). It found that social media afford certain potentials for action, which become perceptible when newsworkers employ them in the context of newswork and that the perception of opportunities for action (affordances) is relative to newsworkers' culture of practice. The approach was made richer through the use of multiple methods (a combination of qualitative interviews, non-participant observation, framing analysis, and SNS analysis). The outcome has been a detailed and holistic account of a sector of the journalism industry in transition which explicates processes of change that have implications not only for the future of GNA journalism but more broadly for the profession.

It would be remiss not to remind the reader of the inevitable bane of any 21st-century newsroom study such as this: the rapid evolution of digital newswork causing the sands to shift in such short periods of time. The majority of the interviews, observation, SNS analysis, and guideline analysis were conducted between 2010 and 2013 so it is likely that technologies and practices have changed at least somewhat. New social media are now on the scene, which support a range of different practices – for example Meerkat and Periscope enable livestreaming (Abernathy 2015). Existing social media have also evolved to offer new possibilities for action, for example Facebook allowing users to pay to message people to whom they are not connected (Facebook 2012) or for brands to promote posts (Murphy Kelly 2012). And news production infrastructures continue to change in order to be compatible with new media, for example big organisations such as the BBC choosing new content management systems that synchronise with social media (BBC 2015). However it is likely that many of the broad trends identified here will endure for some time and that insights generated by this research will be useful for understanding more broadly how GNAs (and other large, legacy news organisations) and their newsworkers deal with new technologies for news production.

9.5 Recommendations for Further Research

This thesis has shown that use of social media in GNA news production can foster more participatory approaches to journalism but that this is not a given, rather it depends on the socio-technical infrastructure into which they are added and the potential compatibility with its associated culture of practice. This research has honed in on specific elements of social media use at GNAs but much more research within news agencies is necessary to

describe and analyse the changes taking place and their impacts. Important questions about the mediating role of social media remain, for example regarding unequal access, marginalisation, data commodification, and privacy to name a few. Following on from the findings of this thesis concerning how GNAs are using social media, it becomes important to investigate the implications of the intermediation of these technologies, for instance between news 'producer' and 'receiver'. The news agency research agenda must include "deconstructing what meanings developers impute to their platforms" (Van Dijck 2013: 11) and interrogating how this shapes GNA journalism. This involves investigating the role of algorithms that are embedded in social media, which now shape, curate, and legitimate knowledge (Gillespie 2014). More work is needed on understanding the materiality and politics of social media technologies in GNA news and this work should begin from the premise that technology is not neutral - nor do technologies themselves cause change but must be seen as part of wider socio-material contexts. Established methods of news production research such as ethnography and participant observation, as well as non-participant observation and interview that were used in this thesis remain fruitful for eliciting the rich data needed to understand the complexity of journalistic environments (as shown recently by Boyer 2013 and explained by Cottle 2000). However, the incorporation of newer approaches, such as the analysis of social network site activity used here or forms of software-supported monitoring and logging of internet use found in subject areas such as educational technology research (Judd and Kennedy 2010; 2011), would update and enrich the field. Furthermore, Brabham's call to pay attention to strategic communication and the professionalisation of online community management, to remember that relatively few people are on social media, to talk to people, and to complicate what engagement means (2015) is highly relevant for contemporary Journalism Studies. The study of normal, everyday experiences of social media would certainly benefit a journalism research agenda too often focused on stand-out cases and increasingly reliant on big data sets that have questionable relevance for developing a sophisticated understanding of social media in journalism practice.

9.6 Conclusion

This thesis has shed light on an increasingly important element of news production (social media practice) in an under-researched field (news agency studies) but it concludes that this area remains relatively unexplained to the scholarly community and marginal in the

public imagination. It calls for a news production research agenda that foregrounds exploration of the relationship between newsworkers and technology in context and urges continued investigation of this influential oligopoly of GNAs in the digital and networked era of journalism. In order to achieve this, it advocates drawing from pertinent research strands, particularly in science and technology studies, new and social media studies, and cultural studies in order to build appropriate theory.

This thesis has created a useful theoretical tool in the researcher's armoury for examining social media (and other new technology) in news production and applied it successfully to elucidate the changes to GNA journalism. The research aimed to find out what the role of social media is in GNA news production and what the implications of this are for GNA journalism. By systematically analysing transformation of the GNA culture of practice through examining the changes made to its socio-technical infrastructure when incorporating social media, the thesis has explained evolving norms, values, and practices in context. These are important factors in the construction of news and this analysis helps to identify the key ways newsworkers and GNAs are drawing on new resources to produce news. Using interviews and innovative analysis of SNS activity, the thesis described and explained how newsworkers and GNAs are extending traditional practices to social media but also finding new and hybrid ways to utilise affordances related to social media. They are social networking the news and with this, developing an ethic of professional sociability. Analysis of social media guidelines identified how GNAs are framing social media as a competing culture of practice to that of the GNA whilst encouraging use. They are using this frame to shape newsworkers' practice by informing how they perceive and act upon the affordances of social media – always prioritising GNA values. Overall, these changes are re-organising the GNA relationship with the public, business model and role in the journalism ecology. Social media now support a GNA-public relationship in a way that was never before possible: between the user and organisation, and the user and individual newsworker, which can be both continuous and two-way, thus facilitating communication and the exchange of data. Provision of news directly to the public for no direct financial recompense shows a shift in business model as GNAs attract a wider audience directly to their journalism, putting them in competition with many of their clients. In this way, their social role is becoming that of a key node in the social network for up-to-the-minute, verified, reliable news.

This thesis is significant for its unique contribution of the 'cultures of practice' theoretical framework and original insights into contemporary news production in the highly influential but under-researched global news agency context in a digital and networked era. As journalism and social media increasingly intersect, the nature of news production is

changing. This thesis presents a useful empirical assessment of the impact of this transformation at GNAs, which has implications for journalism more broadly, as well as a cross-disciplinary theoretical tool that brings mutual shaping and infrastructural approaches into journalism studies to help researchers systematically analyse social media technology in news production practice. This exploratory research represents only an initial part of a conversation about social media at GNAs, situated within a wave of work into new media and journalism. Though it provides some incipient insight, it should signal the need for further research that tackles critical analysis of the intersection of social media and global news agency journalism.

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