14th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism

Day 1, April 19, 2013: Afternoon Session - 4:30-6:00 p.m.
The News Business: Behind the Scenes in the Newsroom

Symposium Research Chair: Amy Schmitz Weiss, Assistant Professor, **San Diego State University**

Research Panelists:

- **Elizabeth Hendrickson, Vandana Singh,** and **Caroline Redmond,** University of Tennessee-Knoxville: *iPerceive: Platform Priorities and Workplace Innovation in America's Consumer Magazine Industry*
- **David A. Craig and Mohammad Yousuf,** University of Oklahoma: *Excellence in Journalistic Use of Social Media Through the Eyes of Social Media Editors*
- **Cindy Royal,** Texas State University - San Marcos: **Interactives of Olympic Proportions: The Diffusion of Data Journalism at The New York Times**
- **Tamar Ashuri,** Tel-Aviv University, Israel and **Atara Frenkel-Faran,** Sapir Academic College, Israel: *The "Status" of News: Implementation of Networked Technologies in Television News Organizations*
- **Mark A. Poepsel,** Loyola University, New Orleans: *The Scion of Public Journalism: Case Study Evidence of a Link Between Civic and Social Journalism and the Potential for an Atomized Public Sphere*

Mohammad Yousuf: Good afternoon. Our study is about excellence in journalistic use of social media. So, we examined what constitutes excellence in journalistic use of social media at a time when the issue is under debate among scholars and professionals. So with that, we can make a big contribution to the understanding of what, like, excellence means in the use of social media by journalists. For the study, we reviewed three broad areas of literature: meaning of excellence in journalism, role of social media in journalism, and ethical issues and challenges in journalistic use of social media.

For the study, we used a theoretical framework of philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. He was talking about the evolution of a practice, and his theory is about — he's talking about, like, excellence depends on these standards rooted in the best traditions of a practice, and the pursuit of excellence will lead to distinctive achievement, internal goods, and reshapes the meaning of

excellence. It requires virtues and sometimes the person's excellence threatens the process of a practice.

So, we have only one research question. It's, how do social media editors understand the meaning of excellence in journalistic use of social media? So, we interviewed some social media editors of big news organizations; although, our sample was small, but they represent a wide range of news organizations like long existing news organizations, and some recent online-only news organizations, and they all have global audience. We also used the interviews of Liz Heron and Andy Carvin, who just talked in the last session. We collected those interviews from online.

From the study, five themes emerged and these themes emerged in multiple interviews and they are involved in the evolution of excellence in journalism. I'll go after them one after another. The first finding we have got is, the first element of excellence in journalistic use of social media is maintaining traditional accuracy standards and recognizing the new environment. As we know, journalists now work in a larger network of constant network flow, where a lot of information comes in online, and journalists need to deal with them. A second important issue with the new environment is like what social media editors were talking about — acknowledgement of unverified information that journalists get from this large network.

Second finding is sophistication in verification practices. Like, as we use social media as a tool of journalism, there needs to be improvement in verification practices. So, they were talking about multifaceted sets of practices, like using journalistic judgment and combining this judgment with technological tools, like, when we use journalistic judgment we mean like, for example, involving Twitter accounts, if we use any tweets or retweet something, their history. And combining technological tools means verifying pictures or videos or even information with some software or some websites. For example, they were talking about Google art and reverse image search to see whether a picture is new or not, whether they are being used by other people or not.

And the third finding is sophistication in engagement, like, by sophistication in engagement, they mean journalists should not use social media for, like, self-exposure. They should use social media to engage with their audience to build audience, to build a community and drawing the users into the process of reporting. For example, Daniel Victor, he now works with The New York Times, and he was at ProPublica when we interviewed him. He was talking about a Facebook group called Patient Harm Community as an example how journalists engage with their audience and they build community. That specific group, like, two journalists monitored that group and they encouraged the audience to engage in a conversation over patient harm, and what are the causes of patient harm, and what could be the solutions, like, in a polite way. And journalists monitored that.

And the fourth finding we have got is tailoring use of platform when all different social media have different features that can be used in different ways. So, journalists should investigate those platforms critically. For example, Facebook can be used for conversation to know details about the audience and Twitter can be used to get breaking news, to get updates about news, to get like news tips.

And adding value by human being. So, it's the journalist who need to make the choice to get the best from a platform they're using for journalistic purpose, and they need to be transparent, and they need to admit their mistakes to their audience they are serving.

So, these are the five findings we have got in this study. So, we, in this study, we kind of built on Alastair MacIntyre's theory of practice. He situates the development of social media practices in a large evolution of the meaning of excellence in journalism. And the findings we have got, for example, verification and engagement in new ways with the audience, it expands the capacity of journalists for story development and conversation. And these five elements — the pursuit of these five elements can advance internal goods, such as inquiry and fostering community.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Cindy Royal: Hi, everybody. I'm really happy to be here. I've been to a lot of these ISOJ Conferences, so it's always nice to be able to present my research in an environment that really accepts progressive and forward thinking ideas. So, it's always great to be around all of you people. I have a lot of my students here, so hopefully y'all will say hi to them. Wave, Texas State. [cheers from Texas State group] [laughs] And as Amy said, I'm going to talk about the diffusion of data journalism at New York Times through the lens of looking at their Olympic coverage with data visualization. Since 2008, they were really kind of on the forefront of doing that. And the coverage has changed over the years, and the number of organizations doing this kind of work has changed over the years. So, I thought it might be helpful to take a look at how they've progressed in the three different Olympic games that we've had in that timeframe.

So basically, as we've been talking about all day, programming and data techniques are heavily influencing the way that we now tell stories, but not that many organizations are able to do it yet. New York Times is one. There are obviously a lot more now, like NPR and Digital First Media, Washington Post, obviously the Texas Tribune, WNYC. There are lots of organizations that are doing some of these things, but The New York Times has really kind of pioneered this area in many ways. And they do things in ways where they integrate a lot of different desks, a lot of different departments—graphics, data, multimedia—and they kind of pull it all together. So, it's interesting to

take a look at what they have done. And I thought that the Olympic games, because it kind of includes all those things, would provide an interesting way to look at it.

So, I started with the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and I analyzed the evolution of graphic and data visualization, and I compared it, and I jus thought it would be kind of a good barometer for assessing innovation over a period of time. So, the literature. I'll just go over that very, very quickly. I don't want to bore you with a lot of the theory. But I think the very first comment here from Edward Tufte kind of describes in essence what I'm trying to get at here, is that, "Excellence in statistical graphics consists of complex ideas communicated with clarity, precision, and efficiency." And I think that's also a good definition for excellence in journalism. So, I think that kind of like marries the two together quite well. If we're going to do statistical analysis and tell stories, we're talking about clarity, efficiency, and precision.

But Phillip Meyer talked about precision journalism in saying, "Knowing what to do with data is the essence of the new precision journalism." So, that's what we're talking about. Adrian Holovaty coined the term 'programmer journalist,' so we have sort of a new role. He coined this several years ago when he started every blog, "Rest in peace," every blog. But this idea has sort of progressed in terms of giving — finding journalists who have higher end technology skills. We've had people at this event over the years that have represented that area. And it's an area that I'm very interested in helping students gain that skill set.

There are not a lot of mass communication articles on data journalism. I was very happy to be able to present my visit to The New York Times here in 2010. There is an article in New Media & Society from a couple of Parisian scholars that they also did a similar ethnography observational study at the Chicago Tribune. And when I go to places like AJ&C, the last time, I didn't really see any panels or research being done on data journalism. So, it's a very productive area. There's interactivity research and there's diffusion research.

So, I wanted to look at how the presentation of the graphics have changed over time and I wanted to look at the levels of interactivity and the amount of data that they use. So, basically, The New York Times has used the graphics presentations on a topics page, and each of those years has a topics page associated with it…conveniently for me to be able to look at this data. So, you go to these different links and actually look at the topics pages. Each interactive was coded for interactivity and presence of data. And in each of the years, this was the number that I assessed. It was the actually amount that were on the topics pages. So, there were 30, 29, and 22. So, about the same in '08 and '10, but in 2012, they had fewer, but you can see that there's a different level of quality.

So, I assessed interactivity on a scale of 1 to 4. Limited activity for the user; basically pushing a play button. And then it kind of progresses through a higher end of interactivity, where it's very advanced, non-linear navigation. Ability to interact with multiple events or sections within the data-driven interactive. And I'll show you some examples as we get into it. But here's the results, just real quick. The level of interactivity increased over time. You can see that the number 3 and the number 4 areas are higher in 2012 than they were in the previous year, so they are adding more interactivity, more opportunities for engagement with the users.

The data for this purpose, I looked it in three different ways. I looked at whether it had no data in the interactive. It was interactive in some other way. In some cases, data was just embedded in like a slideshow. It was maybe like in a photo or it was in an animation, but it wasn't data that was in a backend like a database that somebody could interact with. And then I looked at vast amounts of data. And you can see here the blue bar represents the amount of data, and you see that the use of data has increased, really kind of replacing the things that I called embedded data, where they figured out ways to use data in a more interactive way in a more integrated way in the interactives now.

So, you know, the numbers really don't tell you that much. I really wanted to go through what some of the themes were for each of the Olympic years. And so, in 2008, the themes were really presentations with animations and limited data. This one had to do with a swimming relay. And it was sort of more or less like an audio slideshow, but they would sort of include data in some of the graphics that they introduced in the audio slideshow. But they did have some advanced presentations of data. I mean, to be able to go in and see they've got it geographically or by country size, I believe, in terms of ranking, by all these years that go back over time. To be able to spend as much time as you need looking at that data, it's very, very powerful and very, very engaging. Lots of data in a backend.

This, in 2008, was developed in Flash because there was some interactivity around it and they have been able to migrate away from Flash, but they were still doing some wonderful things with data even as far back as '08.

In Vancouver, they started really looking at animations that covered techniques, because people who really like the Olympics wanted to understand maybe how difficult certain techniques were or what you have to do to be able to achieve a certain technique. So, they started doing animations that covered a vast range of different types of techniques, in terms of the Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

And an advanced data presentation. How many of you have seen this, called "Fractions of a Second," the Olympic musical? Not that many of you. Oh, that's too bad, because I wanted to show it to you. We tested it before in the browser. The Flash player wasn't updated. [laughs] And it does require Flash.

But it's a really great—and I encourage you to go look at it—it's a really great interactive, where you get to pick whichever event you want and then it plays a tone for like when the finalists come through. So, you might have 1 through 25 skiers all coming through the finish line, but when you hear it in a ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, like from 1 to 25, you're done. I mean, you either got the gold or you went home said because you were 25th place. So, I thought it was a very interesting way—and Amanda Cox from The New York Times was the one who developed this—a really interesting way to demonstrate how — and a really kind of out-of-the-box way to have an audible way to think about finishing.

They also had some user contribution activities in 2010. I'm not sure how wise it is to get people to send in their snowboarding tricks, but that's what they did. There was a whole bunch of them that was just like average users sending in videos of their snowboarding tricks. And obviously, people could send in pictures.

And then 2012 in London. It dealt with interactivity, data integration with multimedia, and it was very vast in 2012 for London. Abandoned Flash. They redesigned everything, even that medals chart that I talked about, and they got rid of Flash. And in 2012, almost half the projects met the criteria for level 3 or 4 of interactivity compared with 23% in '08 and 27% in 2010.

Some of the good ones that they had in 2010. I don't know if any of you have seen this, but this is like one race, every medalist ever, and you get to see back into Olympic games time all the different places, the different times that people have had. And you can see how athletes have somehow improved a lot over the past decades.

And then the new Olympic stars of Twitter. They started engaging social media by…. And this is kind of a cool interactive, in that it lets you step through almost like a slideshow, but then you can also kind of go through at different timeframes and see how much somebody was talking about a particular athlete on Twitter. So, I thought that one was pretty interesting.

So, to wrap up, which I think I'm running out of time, they introduced graphic presentations that were more interactive and relied more on data over time. Understanding how data-driven interactives contribute to storytelling may challenge some of the things that we assume about doing research though. Doing content analysis is very different. There are different assumptions that you have to make when you're starting to code an interactive than if you're coding a story. Application of theory. I mean, you have to think of like maybe a new theory to apply to this or how it might be able to — how you might be able to apply existing theory and adjust it.

And then, just being able to think about, like, what are meaningful ways to apply data in a interactive situation? I mean, just because you *can* do it

doesn't mean you *should* do it, but I think The New York Times has done some very valuable presentations.

In general, it's unclear how revenue is to be generated by these projects, but they have the potential to attract a lot of users, so I think that's the first step in trying to figure out how there might be some revenue potential as well as just the skills that people gain. We talked about some new competencies that might be able to be revenue generators earlier today.

Interactivity can obviously aid in learning and comprehension of issues. And we'll need some metrics to assess how well we do with these projects. And because I'm an academic and a lot of you are academics in here, I mean, some of the potential that we have in academic programs is there are not that many programs that are teaching any of the skills to be — definitely not to be able to do these projects, but to do anything with data. So, we need more programs that can do that. We have this huge opportunity to be able to meet the need that the industry has if we start teaching these.

And if you look at my students, every one that came was a female this time. We have a ton of female students who are interested in these topics. It's a great way to get them technology skills by bringing them into a discipline where they're already highly represented.

And so, as a conclusion, news delivery is the future and really everybody needs to become familiar with digital delivery of data and being able to engage users.

So, that's it. You can find my presentation on my slideshow.

[Applause.]

Tamar Ashuri: Thank you very much, and good afternoon. In recent years, a growing number of studies—and we heard some of them today—highlight the role of the technologies in the journalistic arena and argue that the implementation of these technologies are slow and sluggish.

Our objective was to explore the reason for the limited use of new networked technologies in news organizations in Israel. And we focused on two news desks. One is Channel 2 and the other is Channel 10.

We tried more specifically to identify the elements that enable as well as constrain the implementation of innovative technologies in these main traditional news organizations.

Our research framework that we employed was a theoretical framework that was developed in information system studies. We predicted mainly on the work of Wanda Orlikowski and Debra Gush. Orlikowski and Gush argued that by examining key actors' notions of technologies, which they called

technological frames, one may gain considerable insight into how technologies are developed in organizations and how people interact with changes in the work arenas.

The author identified three frame domains. One, the nature of technologies, referring to people's images of technology and their understanding of the capacity and functionality. The second is technology strategy, consisting of people's views of why the organization acquired and implemented a particular technology. And three, technology news, addressing people's understanding of how the technology will be used on a day-to-day basis and the likely or actual conditions and consequences associated with this use.

To these three domains, we add a fourth one that we term nature of profession, referring to journalists perceptions of their professional context. We examined journalists view of the nature and the role of their profession and how they can benefit professionally from the emergence of new technological tools.

We suggest that you understand the implementation of technologies in an organization. The key actors' notion of technologies must be identified in these two different but interrelated social, cultural contexts. First, the organization in which they operate, and second, their profession.

So, instead of inquiring whether and how networked technologies facilitate transformation in the journalistic environment, we examined the theoretical—sorry—the technological frames that journalists perceive regarding the technologies at hand. Seeking to explain the partial and sluggish use of networked technologies by journalists.

We focused on three chief research questions. First, how do journalists in a given news organization understand the technologies they use and their functionality? The second question was, how do journalists perceive their journalistic profession, its nature, and role, and the contribution of the emerging new technologies to their work? The third question was, how do journalists explain their organization's acquisition of a specific networked technology, and how do they understand and use this technology on a day-to-day basis, and the likely or actual conditions and consequences associated with such use?

To answer this question, we observed the implementation of networked technologies in two Israeli television news desks. I mentioned them before—Channel 2 and Channel 10. These networks were chosen mainly because they provide the most frequently watched news bulletin in the country. So that's the main reason for choosing them.

During the summer and fall of 2011, we conducted semi-structured interview with elite producers, editors, journalists active in implementing networked technologies in these two organizations. We found that networked

technologies and platforms are used primarily for marketing purposes, including increasing the number of television viewers and reinforcing the news desk brand name. Besides marketing, journalists apply networked technologies and platform in actual journalistic work using the Internet as a source of information and as a tool for obtaining real-time field testimony from people at a scene of an unfolding event. While the expanding area of screen does have its users, news desk journalists concentrate chiefly on application that can increase the number of home television viewers.

So, despite recognition of the importance and centrality of networked technologies and platforms, the specific and limited use by journalists contributes to a derivative of journalists' interpretive schemes in three respects: ethical, social, and economic.

First is the ethical aspect. Professionally the journalists perceive their social function as exclusive responsibility for gathering newsworthy and reliable information, organizing it, and distributing it in a manner that's fractured the public and political agendas. This conception limits the use of the Internet, which they consider *the* centralized and anarchistic technology floated with unreliable content, distributed to an audience of underdetermined size and underdetermined time.

The second is the social aspect. From a social point of view, the journalist perceive their growing audience requires information that is organized in a variety of screen types, in need of an order and anthological security supplied exclusively by television news. In accordance with our conceptions regarding this centrality of television news programs, optimal use of the Internet is perceived primarily as promotion of such programs.

The economic aspect. We suggest that journalists conceptions regarding the economic aspect of networked technologies and platforms provide a meaningful explanation of the limited uses thereof. Journalists fail to recognize a business model that will allow profitability of online network news. They believe that as long as their organization is unable to derive profit from the new technology, it will not invest significant resources in them.

To sum, we suggest that traditional conceptions of broadcast journalism regarding the role of the professional journalists [and] the news organization's economic structure and the nature of news consumption habits limit full use of networked technologies in the organizations studied.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Mark Poepsel: I watched Jonathan Groves. I watched *Grovesie* make a presentation via Twitter about my dissertation topic last year, and I said,

"That's it. I'm revising a chapter and I'm bringing it to ISOJ. I have to be here to talk about this." I mean, he did a great job. He did such a good job [that] I ended up citing him in the revised version of my paper. I'm from Loyola University, New Orleans. Just took a 10-year trek appointment up at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. So, if you're looking for me, you can find me en route somewhere between New Orleans and St. Louis.

Who here remembers public journalism? OK, so I probably should go through the definition slides. Who here actually practiced public journalism in a news room [and] was told, "We're doing [more] public journalism than we did in…"? OK, the numbers are small, but it's not nobody. Essentially, one narrative of public journalism is it came about in 1988 after the election. So, you've had Ronald Reagan for eight years and then George H.W. Bush wins, and the rhetoric, the Willy Horton issue. People in news were quite concerned that people were not getting the message and that we were losing contact and readership was dropping. And so, this in large part comes out of newspapers, but it's not only newspapers. But it essentially involves outreach. Trying to go out to audiences and inculcate participation. And it's, you know, laying the groundwork for participatory journalism. And it's, you know, where you see people like Jay Rosen, I guess, start to get deeply involved, published widely.

So, there were two types of practical implications with public journalism, often called civic journalism. People were actually actively going out in the community saying, "Tell us your issues. Help us set agendas." On the other hand, sometimes it was being used as a marketing technique. For theorists, it's pretty basic. We identified it as being open and collaborative. OK? That's a good job. Got to define it first. Denton and Thorson started pointing out, "OK, scholars, cool your jets. Just because people are changing the content doesn't necessarily mean we're going to change society. We've had this thing called agenda setting for many years now." And the mere, I guess, reconfiguration of the way we put messages together doesn't necessarily mean we're going to instantly influence society deeply across the board. It's called limited effects. Thank you very much.

So, those are some basic takes from the academics—define it, and then set it, make sure you limit it. And then you have people coming, you know, John Merrill and his camp saying, "This is communitarianism's rhetorical war against enlightenment liberalism." That's actually a laugh line. But if you don't get it, it's okay. [laughter] On the other hand, I get a chance to read into the web record of whatever Jay Altschull's counterpoint, and I have to read it in full. Altschull says, "I would like to agree with Merrill, for I admire his cheerful optimism and his belief that somehow America's journalists will yet arrive at the sunny uplands that he sees is still within their reach. I used to believe that myself before I had come to recognize that individual tilters at windmills are simply unable to challenge money."

The argument is we're involving the public in setting the agenda, because things aren't getting done. We keep identifying problems and seeing nothing happen. And what are we doing here anyway? Aren't we supposed to be making the world a better place? And I guess that's what it comes down to. And I'm glad I get to present last, because we've been talking all day about innovation on one side—or maybe it's not on one side, maybe it's deeply ingrained in everything we do—and newsroom culture on the other side. That's basically what my dissertation was. And this chapter is essentially just the historical underpinnings of my dissertation topic.

So, what I did with this paper—just to summarize it for you, because we're not going to do 20 minutes—I looked at public journalism and defined it. Then I looked this social journalism content management system, which incorporated some social media capabilities into a CMS built on Ellington. Mostly crafty by Adrian Holovaty, so we'll throw another shout-out to Adrian Holovaty. And then I said, OK, does this look like public journalism? And yes, it does. [laughter] [changes slide] There's 15 pages of the paper right there. [laughter] That's what people say every time I post pictures of my child on Facebook. "That's nice. You have a child. So what?" [laughter] So, the 'so what' is, does this look like it could be an example of the functioning public sphere? The space for rational, critical debate? The sort of holy grail of journalism? At least journalism in the service of democracy as defined in America? And there are people from 30 countries here, so I apologize if our historical definitions of perfect journalism aren't necessarily the same as yours. I'm aware of comparative media studies. I'm just not talking about that today.

And this is obviously from Western Europe. This is Habermas and public sphere. I don't need to hopefully define the public sphere to you. But the basic idea is there's space, if you want to think of it, metaphorical space where people get together and we talk about our issues. And we decide, you know, rank order them, and also what we might be doing about them. And there is perceived to be private power in the hands of the people, public entities enacting that power. This is the space where they come together and we tell you what's what. We, the people, tell the government what's what.

So, when 90% of the people say they want background checks, and 90% of democrats in the Senate want background checks, it happens, right? [some laughter] Right? You can say no. You can answer. [chuckles] So, that's the idea of the public sphere. I do always like to throw in Terra Nova. That is a photo from the TV show Terra Nova, just because I needed a photo at some point in this presentation. Actually, Terra Nova is a person.

The problem obviously with the public sphere is, okay, it's a great ideal, but that assumes there's a public that wants to participate or *can* participate in rational, critical debate. So, I'm setting us up for these. And Gitlin also limits the expectations. Basically, I'm setting us up to fail, right? It's not good enough to just have a functioning public sphere. You also have to influence

society and make them care and make it cool to participate. Can a website do that? OK?

And I'm say, okay, well, I mean, this is…. I don't know if you can see it. It's a guy dressed like Darth Vader [chuckles] and somebody dressed like the Emperor, and they are sawing the first board in the Death Star. And I'm saying, "You've got to start somewhere." OK?

So, this paper looks for the potential for a functioning public sphere. It's quite limited. I mean, the best thing we're going to see is the atomized public sphere. What Gitlin called a *sphericule*. OK? And I'm just asking, okay, I've established this as a scion of public journalism. These ideals have been in place for many years. Articulated well in the late 80's through the 90's. Do we see evidence that through technological innovation and the marriage of the cultural ideals of journalism and technological practices, can we see something like a functioning public sphere?

And here are…. Oh, and the three areas where we're looking: Are they making space for discourse? Is it rational and critical anyway? Could there be cultural change? Could there be education? Could we make it, if not cool, could we engage people at least to the level where they want to do it? And the answer is, in all three case, yeah, kinda. All right? I mean, I could just leave you at that and you could go to happy hour, but I will kind of touch on a couple of these quotes, and then I'm sure we'll have questions.

In terms of making a space for debate, okay, here's what's important. This is an Ellington. They iteratively developed — redeveloped Ellington, so that it was public facing. So, Ellington's content management system was like, "We're going to add social media tools where you can follow each other like Twitter. You can create groups. You can build your own news feeds. And we're going to take that publishing platform and make it publicly focused. And then we're going to change the role of the journalists." So the artist formerly known as a beat journalist is now a community manager. OK? And her job is to follow in the comments, follow-up on things, answer people's questions, and to get down to the very nitty-gritty of what people want done. So, I'll get into her routine a little bit more.

First, let's talk about space. There are two sites happening in this news organization. One is the, quote/unquote, "traditional" newspaper site where people will go out of their way to be snarky. On the site that I studied, the social journalism CMS that I'm talking about, they required people to use their real names. This came out of an iterative development process that involved the community. They wanted people to use their real names, because if they were subjected—the people who were forming groups and sponsoring this site—if they were subjected to the kind of crap that goes on in online comments on this newspaper, they didn't want to have any part of it. So, they helped make a safe space. What they found was the people who wanted to limit people commenting, the community who got in…. I can't do

this all in ten minutes. But they got the community involved in forming the CMS. The talked to everybody in this specific niche. It was health in a Kansas town. And they said, "We want you to tell us what kind of site to make." And they said, "Well, we want to limit access completely. You have to register and you have to be accepted by every group before you can publish anything under what that group posts." And then they're like, "We're getting no traffic. we need to open it up." The people said that to the news organization.

So, I think through getting buy-in, they are starting from a point of collaboration. So, there's at least some civic learning going on here. There's at least people learning that this is important. So, I've said, they did make a space. Was the debate rational-critical? People were reasonable with one another. This was not super critical. And the pulled quote from my paper might be that sometimes we in news media have conflated argument with critical discussion. To argue is not necessarily to be critical. People can generally agree on things and still be thinking critically, or they can generally agree on things and they can be Pollyannish and just chit-chatting. So, that will require further content analysis.

Do we have cultural change? Well, at least we're inviting people to help form the CMS itself. There's potential for cultural change. So remember the Darth Vader slide. All I'm talking about is potential. And I'm saying, yes, there's potential, but in a very limited way. And criticism of Habermas has always been that he's talking about a virtual, public sphere, not necessarily a collective. And criticism is that, you know, you can create a functioning public sphere, but can you change society so much that anything really gets done? And the answer is, I don't know, but at least they are trying.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

Amy Schmitz Weiss: Well, again, as you're compiling, thinking about your questions that you'd like to ask each of our scholars, I'm going to start off by talking with them about some questions I've been thinking about throughout the day. This panel in particular is called "Looking Behind the Scenes of the Newsroom." And it provides a lens for us to see exactly how in each of these cases the scholars delved into a specific aspect of how specifically journalists and the public are working in each of their areas in terms of getting information, as well as disseminating that information out in a variety of ways, whether it's through social media, through the creation of a content management system, through data interactives, and even through broadcast users. And I think in each case, it helps to open up the lens to help us to understand a little bit more about what's happening as journalism is evolving and as we're having these conversations today and tomorrow as well.

Andy Carvin's talk earlier was amazing. He gave a lot of great points [that] I'm still thinking about and still muddling over. But one of the key ones I

wanted to ask each of the scholars here in terms of one of the points that he brought up this afternoon was, how do we go about informing the public? And what does it mean to have an informed public? And I think with each of your research projects that you've delved into, I think you could address a little bit of how you see that particular definition forming and what you think might be a possible way of responding to that. So, why don't we start with Mark?

Mark Poepsel: I think we need to do as much advocacy for education in this country as we can. And I mean media literacy education across the board, starting in elementary school. But I also think that if journalists are not actively advocating for a more educated public, then it isn't going to matter, because we're always talking about participatory journalism, but as Terra Nova pointed out, "What's the point of participation if the people aren't thinking critically to begin with?" And so, maybe that's a Marxist critical perspective that just kind of slivered its way into our discussion, but I'm not ashamed to say that. I think, what difference does it make if we're participating with people if the people want to believe Rush Limbaugh anyway. So, there's a cynic. [laughs]

Tamar Ashuri: I think in our case, it was very interesting to hear from the journalists, the interviewees. They have this very traditional point of view about their role. And I think in Israel it's a special case of citizens that are really into the news, and the ratings of the TV news desk are extremely high and going up every year. I think it's an extraordinary case. It's not the common case, especially not in the U.S. And what was especially interesting in the case of the journalists use was their talk about not only informing the public, but mostly about giving the public this anthological security. This thought of not only telling you what happened today and summarizing the stories of what you could follow on the Internet or wherever. It was mostly about this thought of the journalists that their role was to tell the public, "Okay, whatever happened, we're here. We'll be here tomorrow. And we were with you [during] whatever disaster happened in the country. And you remember us as the people who delivered the message of, 'This is what happened.' We'll be here again tomorrow." So, I think it's not only about informing the public, but also I think [the] very important role the journalists perceive they are doing as just being there, and not just telling the story, but also telling that the story will continue and we're here to see how it will unfold next.

Mark Poepsel: That's kind of interesting, because I had a phone call from our local Fox affiliate. They wanted to do [an interview]. I'm like, "I'm not in town. I can't do an interview with you." They're like, "We'll do Skype." "All right. Wait till six. Leave me alone." They want to talk about how bad the media screwed up over the past couple of days with Boston. I'm saying, well, yeah, but I also fell asleep last night to a live feed online from a local Boston station at 2:00, 3:00 their time. Still publishing. Still going constantly on to let people know, who are holed up in their houses in Cambridge that, "We're

still here and this is still going on. And here's exactly where it is. And it's not safe to come out yet, but nobody else is dead. And sit tight." And, you know, we owe a debt of gratitude to broadcast journalists and to people working online and making the most of Twitter for doing that. So, you know, if you're not looking at what we do right and you're only looking at the times people make ethical mistakes and call somebody dark skinned for no apparent reason, you know, you're only seeing part of the picture.

Tamar Ashuri: Yeah. I think, also, if I might, often in Israel when there's an ongoing story, you can see that there's no breaking news for like 15-20 minutes, but they are still on, because people have this need just to see them on the screen. So, I think it's not just about information. It's also about just being there sometimes does the job.

Mark Poepsel: Just like having lunch. Like, what do they do for that 15 minutes? What do they do for that? What do they do for that time?

Tamar Ashuri: What do they do?

Mark Poepsel: Yeah.

Tamar Ashuri: You just keep on airing the same pictures and it's especially bizarre because both Channel 2 and Channel 10, that are really rivals every day, just show the exact same pictures. And people know that they will not see anything new, and still they just watch it like a screensaver just to relax, you know, [laughter], in a crazy time.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: How about for you, Cindy? What do you see?

Cindy Royal: Well, I think data-driven interactives hold great potential to inform the public. I think it's just a different way to present information. Maybe the information is a little bit more specific to things that they are interested in or to their locale or anything that has to do more directly with how they live their lives. The examples that I showed were maybe a little bit more entertainment oriented in the Olympic sports. New York Times does things with the Oscars. So, those are kind of fun data-driven projects, but they also do things about elections and public schools. Texas Tribune, you know, shout-out to them again. They do wonderful things with government, publically available government data, and present that in ways that people can interact with. WNYC provided a public service in evacuation areas for Hurricane Sandy. I mean, I can just go through example after example after example, where presenting data in a map or a chart or a graph or something that you can search or customize to yourself is going to make for a much more informed public.

David Craig: I think a key based on work that we've done and are thinking about, stuff that Andy Carvin said earlier today, one key in relation to public being informed and fostering for public is humility on the part of the

journalist and coupling that with respect for the public. He mentioned humility, and that's something that came up in some of our other interviews and is in place for journalists today. Not that their critical judgment is unimportant, but the critical judgment of the public is out there at work all the time and has to be acknowledged in this constant network. So, I think it's key for journalists to listen respectfully, and respect, along with that humility, I think is probably more important than it's ever been, while also still asking critical questions, asking about verification and things that will lead to real accurate information.

Mohammad Yousuf: When we think about like informing the public, you know, like with the new technologies, people, everybody is informing others. We get a lot of information from social media, Facebook, Twitter, that we can't even sometimes handle, like, the information we get. So, I think journalists need to play a role like a leader, so we need to tell, when people come to journalists, they will expect from journalists to get something better than like they get from other media platforms. So, I think technologies, the network, social network, social media, the tools that we journalists got, I think they have been wanting for this for like decades or centuries. I don't think they are…. Journalists should not be scared of this. So, it's the duty of journalists to find out a way how to use these technology tools to engage their people with verified information. They have like more ways to make the information better, so they can start to create.

Mark Poepsel: The presumption in the participatory model in the social journalism content management system is that no journalist is as smart about topics of general interest as the crowd with which they can engage. So, if you're really working with people—you know, Andy Carvin said something similar—but you're exponentially a better journalist, because you are employing a group mind. But the thing that we're really good at, where we can stand out, is to dig in the data and make it and represent it in ways that people can know. And that, I think, is a form of teaching. There's probably something to that. Because I keep saying, we want to not just engage, but educate and go beyond just inviting people to the table. Because another thing I found in the bigger dissertation picture was, if you just ask people to come publish on your site, guess what? They don't just knock down your door and like [say], "Yay, I get to publish for free for you now!" They don't do that, because they have other things. Number one, they have Facebook and Twitter, and they are already…. If they're even on Twitter, which only 16-17% of people are — 16 to 17% of people are. You know, they're already very busy. You don't want to give them another job to do. That's why I'm not on Google Plus that much. "Thanks, I already work for Facebook." [laughter]

Amy Schmitz Weiss: I have a question for David and Yousuf. Andy Carvin earlier mentioned that there are no best practices. I was curious to ask you, in terms of you identifying the five areas of excellence with the social media editors that you spoke with, how do you see that coming together? Do you

agree with Andy? Do you think that there's some place in between? If you can tell me a little bit more what you think about that.

David Craig: I think that best practices, I think they are fundamental elements of excellent work, or if you want to back up from that, just call it good work, but work that reflects better thinking over time [that] journalists have developed. And thinking of people who do ethics and fundamental things like the idea that we ought to seek to tell the truth, I don't think that anybody would reasonably argue that that's not still a good goal, but how it plays out, what it looks like in practice will change over time. And just since these interview were middle of last year, and just since then, we've had more new incidents, even this week, of course, and more opportunities to think about what do the nuances of the practice look like? So, his point that we don't have this all locked down and know what's best. And some aspects of what's best may come to light next week as we reflect on what's happened this week. And then next year, other things may come to light because of news situations. But the really fundamental grounding and ethically, I think, is what does best practice.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: Yousuf, any points you want to add?

Mohammad Yousuf: What I will say is that if you look at the findings we have got, they are not like very far from the traditional excellence, ideas of excellence. So, like, we say first finding was like adherence to traditional ethical standards, so there's probably an excellent practice in journalism, but we need to recognize the new environments. So, what I want to say is like in every finding, we kind of got a conditional like evolution. Like recognizing a new environment, so recognizing a new environment is not like excellent. It's not a practice, but it's something that's evolving, that's changing, so we need to recognize that. So, I would say in every finding, there is a condition like this, like there is evolving. We just wanted to see if journalists agree on at least some forms, and these are the five themes that most of them agree.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: I'm going to go over to Mark. Karen Bernstein, is she here? Karen, she posted an interesting tweet that I just wanted to read, because I was hoping that, Mark, you might be able to address this. I hope you don't mind, Karen. [laughs] I'm putting you out here.

Mark Poepsel: The last thing we should do is engage people.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: I know, right?! [laughter] What am I doing?! All right. No.

Karen Bernstein: Well, first of all, was I wrong?

Amy Schmitz Weiss: No, no, it's a great point. So, Karen brings out, she says, "Mark Poepsel on public journalism. Problem is that it assumes that government cares for public things."

Mark Poepsel: [laughs] Well, yeah. I mean, but…[sighs]…government cares when it loses an election and then you see policy changes. I mean, that's been pretty evident. If you haven't noticed that with immigration and gay rights in the past couple of months, then you've been missing out on what democracy is all about. Democracy is about losing an election and learning your lesson. It's not about necessary changing your thing because you're so smart and so caring. I mean, compassion comes behind getting votes. So, we play the game the way it is. I mean, I guess I don't know how to answer that, because if your premise is the government doesn't care anyway, then what are we doing in discourse? What are we doing here as journalists? I mean, I'm not trying to be like contradictory. It's just … we engage people to be better journalists to mine the agenda that's already existing there, and the information and the knowledge and the concern, and you know, I mean, if it ends up taking campaign form, if people have to do journalism as campaign to convince politicians that this really matters, because maybe that's what has to happen. But you're right, for every immigration policy change and gay marriage policy change, there's a gun debate that goes nowhere. I don't think I answered the question as much as just kind of reiterated what you're saying. You're welcome. [laughs]

Karen Bernstein: Yeah, I just am fascinated. I'm a documentary film maker, and I specialize in long-form, so short-form and tweeting is all very new to me. And I know that documentary film making has an ability to change the hearts and minds of both government and….

Mark Poepsel: But with data, you'll see people use social media to start doing long-form things and to track. And one of the most promising areas of research is—we haven't touched on it much yet—but one of the most promising areas of journalism is in the ability to do a local wiki and track an issue over 20-30 years. And once we start doing that, I think we can define not just a new market, but a new purpose. If each news story is just the latest drop in the bucket of this deep, local issue, wiki…. In New Orleans, for example, if you can track a politician's promise and potential success, potential failure, and promise, and whatever, whatever, then you start to — these are like readymade documentary films just waiting for somebody to go shoot them. You know, I mean, I have a background in broadcast journalism and I always wanted to make documentary films. And I think one of the things I realize is people aren't going to put together a whole lot of little pieces necessarily.

I think Matt Thompson did research in that vein when he was a research fellow at the Reynolds Journalism Institute at Missouri. He looked at the way that Columbia Missourian covered different issues. And they covered them very well, according to how newspapers are supposed to cover things. Did people remember what happened two years ago? I don't know. So, don't give up on social media because it's only 140 characters per discussion. The aggregate of it could be much more powerful than we've even thought of yet.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: So, we've got some questions. You want to say your name and where you're from?

Brian Barish: Hi. Brian Barish. I'm a graduate student here at UT. And I wanted to address the tweet that you were talking about that we're assuming the government cares what the people think. I don't…. I served under Buzz Merritt at the Wichita paper in the 1990's, and so I was privileged to see public journalism actually being practiced up close. And I don't think that's what it was [about]. It wasn't about government. It was just about having greater engagement in the community in public life in general. And we did a lot around elections and so forth, but it was more than that. It was getting people to care just about stuff, I guess.

Mark Poepsel: Yeah. There's a lot that can get done without government. We are in Texas after all. [laughter] I mean, I was listening to NPR. You probably didn't try it then, but there is a book called—what is it—like, "Hot, Large, and Right" or something like that. It was basically about they have small government here, but Texans still find a way to *do* things. You know, as the fourth estate, we should not shy away from just getting people to do things for their own damn self.

Brian Barish: Yeah, it wasn't really about making government responsive so much as just getting things going … in government or not. Anyway, didn't really have a question. I just wanted to add that.

Mark Poepsel: Thank you.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: We'll go over here and then we'll pass over there to somebody. Tell us who you are.

Kevin Davis: Yeah, hi. Kevin Davis, Investigative News Network. So from the public journalism front, I see two examples that are starting to really take route. One I find troubling. One I do for a living. The one I find troubling is anonymous. And if you look at what's happening with Your Anon News and crowdfunding for their website, one thing I can say is Anonymous did break, I think, over this past week more information about the West Texas explosion more accurately than anybody else did. But clearly, they have an agenda and they have sort of a super legal organization. The group I really want to talk about are the non-profit newsrooms; particularly, community-based newsrooms. Because in order for those organizations to truly be successful in the long-term, they have to monetize the communities that they serve. So there is a direct relationship between the people and the content. So, I'd love to get your thought about whether that evolution is actually happening in a way that fits within that definition and what your thoughts are about that.

Mark Poepsel: Yeah. You're getting back to one of the problems with public journalism is some people were apparently, in looking back with a historical

eye, some news organizations were doing it for marketing purposes and some were doing it Buzz Merritt style, which was bringing people basically to have—I don't want to say picnics if he didn't have picnics—I don't want to make stuff up—but basically inviting people in to talk and help set agendas.

I had the opportunity to be a freelance editor for charter school coverage at The Lens NOLA over the summer and watch up close people at a non-profit news organization cover something that people thought was impossible to cover. Everybody knows it's very difficult to cover, because you take a school district and you break it into 20-some, 30-some charter management organizations that manage 50 schools or something. How can you keep track of all their budgets? And the answer is, you pay people—freelancers—to go get it, and then we try to make sense of it all. So, I think there is a ton of potential there, regardless of whether we can scale non-profit to match the growth of government or the expanse of the universe of all possible news stories. It doesn't really matter. I mean, if they're getting at the heart of the top ten issues in their city in a given year, they are accomplishing most of what we'd expect metro dailies, at least their investigative wing, to cover. So, I'm not saying it's perfect or the end-all, be-all, but, you know, in order to get non-profit status, The Lens had to partner with us at Loyola University New Orleans and take on an educational role, because you can get non-profit status for being educational, but not for being a journalist ... at least under the rules as they were written previously.

So, I apologize for rambling, but think there's huge potential with non-profit newsrooms to involve people. But it is difficult to innovate a business structure—stay with me here—it's difficult to innovate a business structure and a content structure at the same time. So, the people who are working really hard to make non-profit work might have their attention diverted from working really hard to make engagement, participatory journalism work. It doesn't mean they are not willing. It just means, how many different wars do you want us to fight, Mark? [chuckles]

Amy Schmitz Weiss: We have another question over there.

Beth Elderkin: All right. I'm Beth Elderkin. As you can tell, I like asking questions. So, ladies, you were saying that in Israel your audience is very engaged and interacts with you on a regular basis. Now obviously here in the United States it happens as well. We like things fast and immediate. And, you know, with the Boston example this week, if we make even one mistake, like CNN did, it's like we all go through the ringers and, you know, it's tarring and feathering. Do you feel that that's a similar case with your audience if your news networks make a similar mistake? Is there more of a supportive atmosphere with your audience or is it, you know, similar to how it is here?

Atara Frenkel-Faran: I think what we did actually was to try to see how journalists conceived of the audience. And I think the most important part was, yes, in Israel, citizens are very involved and engaged. And we especially

looked at the user-generated content and how the news desk used them or not and to what extent. And I think what it did was actually to try to stop the tide. It's really you see all this engagement coming from citizens and whether it's a text or pictures or video. And you ask the journalist, "What do you do with that? And how do you prepare for this shift?" And they tell you, "Well, we are conservative journalists. We are traditional journalists. We come from print, and we still think of the public in the same way and of our role in the same way." So, okay, now they have all these platform technologies and we can sync from any space, but that's basically what they looked for from the formerly known audience and still [present-day] audience in a way. Because they only leave a very small, I think, minor role to this very engaged public that wants to do so much more.

And I think, for example, lastly, when we tried to see, okay, what comes from the audience, it's only really seconds of YouTube. Really, YouTube seconds from the bomb happened to fall in our backyard and that's how it looked. And you would see that like for 20 minutes until the journalist would come there. And it would be on and on and on, but you know in advance what kind of images you are about to see.

So, I think citizens in Israel have a lot to say and have a will to do it. And often, we see journalists just [as] they don't want to see more engagement, and they conceive their role as very, very, I think, passé, but unfortunately, we don't, we didn't. At least, I think, we didn't see much of a change.

One thing we can say, the audience is usually, I think—I may be being optimistic here—but not very critical of the journalist. I think one of the things that we saw also in the Israel politics is that there was, I think, a major change in political indifference. That it is going for the — it's changing. The last election in Israel also saw a few changes concerning the public, and now it conceives of politics. And I think the media had a major role in that. So, still, it's maybe positive for us.

Mark Poepsel: Do you think she was asking if citizens under siege give journalists more leeway? Like, you can maybe not quite be perfect. You can make an occasional mistake, because we need you, because we're concerned for our lives.

Atara Frenkel-Faran: I think in Israel people are more tolerant to mistakes. I think they are very impatient to get information. And they know that if they want their news to be really every second something new coming in, they know that something has got to give and that reliability will suffer. And I think they are tolerant of that. Of course, some are more than others. But basically, I think because things are going so fast and so dramatic, we don't have the luxury of staying on the critical aspect for too long. And people really want the news. They are really like, "Give it to us!" So, "Okay, give it to us. We know that if you give it to us too fast, there will be

mistakes. Okay. Once it will be finished, we might hold you responsible for that, but for now, just give it to us."

Mark Poepsel: Are people in America demanding the news as quickly as we think they are, or is that our justification for racing to fight each other in some competition that the people would rather we not have? Because it seems like we're at the point now where you need to be first with the tweet. Right? I mean, that's pretty obvious. Do you guys know what I'm saying?

Amy Schmitz Weiss: It's created an interesting situation in today's time. I mean, the 24/7 schedule. Did we create that as journalists or did the public?

Mark Poepsel: But you don't hear journalists say what she just said, which is, well, the people really want it, so they give us a break when we make a mistake. No! They want it fast and they want it to be right all the time ... or so we say. It really depends on…. This is where we need probably to progress with study. What do people really want? Do they really want it to be first or do they…? Again, I'm hyperaware of the critical people on Twitter, but it seems like they'd rather we be right than 25 seconds before some other Twitter user.

Amy Schmitz Weiss: Well, and I think it gets to the point that Andy Carvin mentioned earlier. Should we take the moment to actually slow things down? Why do we need to go in the opposite direction? Right? Well, I'd like us to try and end a few minutes early, so people can get a chance to go to the happy hour. But I want to thank everybody for coming. And for our wonderful scholars who presented this afternoon, thank you.

[Applause.]