Day 1, April 20, 2012: Morning Session - 11:15-12:45 p.m.
Examining the journalist's toolbox: practices, routines, and more

Chair: Tom Johnson, Professor, School of Journalism, University of Texas at Austin

Panelists:

- **Carrie Brown,** University of Memphis: *#Memstorm: Twitter, as a community-driven breaking news reporting tool*
- **Jonathan Groves,** Drury University: *WellCommons.com: Breaking down the barriers between journalists and the community*
- **Bruce Mutsvairo, Simon Columbus, and Iris Leijendekker,** Amsterdam University College (the Netherlands): *African citizen journalists' ethics and the emerging networked public sphere*
- **J. Richard Stevens**, University of Colorado at Boulder: *Social reading and privacy norms: The aesthetic of simplicity, online reading and interface confusion*
- **Lawrie Zion**, La Trobe University (Australia): *"Best practice" in the journalism ethics frame: a comparative study*

Q & A: Tom Johnson and the Panelists

Tom Johnson: Our session is *Examining the journalist's toolbox: practices, routines, and more.* I always wonder how Amy decides which one to put people with. I figured she chose this because she thought I looked the most like Tim, the Tool Man, Taylor. And so, that means Rosental is Al and Amy is Heidi. [laughter] Our first…. As I said, one of the things [is] I did not bring my readers, and so if I get your title wrong, I apologize. Our first presenter is Carrie Brown from the University of Memphis. *#Memstorm: Twitter, as a community-driven breaking news reporting tool.* You have ten minutes, and in the tool box tradition, I have a ball peen hammer. And so, ten minutes.

Carrie Brown: OK. So in April 2011, a series of very powerful storms pounded Memphis, Tennessee, where I'm from, and the surrounding region. For a period of about two-and-a-half days, sirens were blaring and people were huddling in their basements and their bathrooms. There's me with my two dogs chillin' out with the laptop. But when all was said and done, Memphis was relatively lucky. As I'm sure some of you may recall, the same series of storms caused much more extensive damage and loss of life in Tuscaloosa, Alabama and some other places.

Well, certainly, wild weather and severe storms is nothing new in the mid-south, but what was relatively new about this particular series of storms was that instead of just flipping on your TV set to follow your favorite local meteorologist—here's one of our most popular ones in town, Dave Brown—you could also turn to Twitter and the hashtag Memstorm to both access and contribute to another source of real time information. And I was pretty fascinated by this. Here's another photo. And you can see just how popular this hashtag was at the height of the storm.

So, I decided…. (Oh, sorry. I hit the wrong thing. Sorry.) So, I was interested…. I was immediately fascinated by what was going on here. I wanted to figure out how this hashtag came into use. What was interesting about it—this was not driven by local media organizations; although, they did jump on the bandwagon later on. I wanted to know more about what motivated the public to participate and exactly what they were getting out of this, and I wanted to know something about the implications for local journalism.

This study is essentially an exploration of a couple of different concepts that a number of other scholars, like Alfred [Hermida], have written about. I warned him last night [that] I'd put him on the slide: *Ambient journalism and participatory journalism.* Essentially, news today is all around us, but it is increasingly a two-way participatory process. I wanted to understand a little bit more about what really does motivate the public when they are participating and what are their new patterns of news consumption, because that has a lot of implications for us as journalists as we're striving to stay relevant on these new media platforms.

So, how did the hashtag come into use? It was actually originally suggested by a local technology entrepreneur, Aaron Prather. He was the last-minute fill-in at an event called Ignite Memphis. Some of you may be familiar with that. You give five-minute speeches to an audience. He got the idea for the hashtag. He was driving home from one of Memphis's very rare snowstorms, and he was really frustrated with the radio. You know, it wasn't giving him the information he thought would be more valuable. You know, what roads are passable? What's the most efficient route home? Etcetera. And he thought, "Wouldn't it be great if we had this hashtag that we could all contribute to so I could get that kind of information?" He also had the insight that this would also centralize this real-time information, so all these different competing news outlets would not essentially, you know, be trying to grab it for themselves.

The head of a local marketing firm just happened to be in the audience that day at Ignite Memphis. She has a lot of followers on Twitter. And the very next day, sure enough, there was a big storm. She started using the hashtag. A number of other people in the audience started using the hashtag. It sort of got this grassroots momentum, and then the TV stations and later the newspaper in town actually jumped on board.

This was kind of an interesting phenomenon that happened here though. At one point during these big April storms, the local Fox affiliate suggested to everybody that they would use this hashtag "foxstorm" in order to get their tweets out. And this actually erupted in kind of a major backlash. People were really kind of angry that Fox would try and brand this storm after the community had come and started using this other hashtag. And even some people from out of town were joining in. And then finally, you know, Fox backed off, said, "OK, you know, sorry. Didn't mean to do that. We don't care which hashtag you use." Some people were saying, "Just be nice. You know, don't be a hashtag police." But really interesting phenomenon how the community kind of felt about that.

So, what did motivate people to participate? Well, you're probably not surprised, right? Crisis situation. Sharing news and information is obviously one of the big motivations here. The vast majority of all the tweets that I analyzed in my content analysis…. I guess I missed [my method slide]. Maybe I skipped over that slide when I went back. This study is a combination of a content analysis of about 1,600 tweets that I started logging during the storm. Not the most exciting way to spend your weekend analyzing all those tweets, but I did. I also did in-depth interviews with some of the most prolific users of the hashtag, as well as some local journalists and local meteorologists. I did a survey. If you follow me on Twitter, you probably saw me bugging people about that. And I also did some participant observation. During the storm, I was using the hashtag very actively myself. I was using the Storify tool to curate some of the most interesting tweets. So, I was able to take some notes and learn from my own experiences there as well. So, I must have skipped over my method slide there somehow.

But not surprisingly, direct observations was the most common type of tweets there. And a lot of those were direct observations. "Here's what I'm witnessing at my location." Often including a photo or even occasionally a video. You can sort of see some of the results there. But when it came to retweeting, I categorized those separately. Here, you can still see some of the influence of the more traditional media. People sharing more general news and information; stuff like a watch or a warning. And television is really dominating here. At least in our market, television has been much quicker to embrace Twitter than our local newspaper has.

This was actually a little bit south of Memphis, but not very far. One of the more dramatic photos that was shared that day. You can see hailstorm photos. This is sort of an aside, but later that year, some of you remember [the] big flooding on the Mississippi River. People in Memphis changed it up just a little bit and started using 'memflood' hashtag to share some of their observations about that.

So, some of the other reasons people were using this hashtag was to connect with others. A lot of the tweets involved sharing their feelings, your fears, being tired of these stupid sirens blaring for two whole days long. And even though I categorized those separately, there was definitely kind of a sense of people sort of commiserating with each other using this hashtag.

These are actually from the survey. You can see a few quotes of people talking about feeling kind of a sense of comfort while they're huddled in the closet or wherever they were. A lot of houses in Memphis, like ours, don't have basements.

I found this online. Somebody actually made a Team #Memstorm mouse pad. And people were talking about having to tweet up after the storm. Of course, people were kind of joking around talking about having drinking games. Somebody actually made a parody Memstorm account. They tweeted a few serious things, but a lot of it was attempts at humor with personifying the storm. There were some folks also asking questions, crowdsourcing, trying to find out what conditions were like in other areas of the community, and then you could see people responding back to them. So, kind of interesting.

So, what [were] the implications here for journalists in this environment? (That's what's happening, I'm going to fast.) This is sort of a summary of a lot of things that I found. Not surprisingly, one role is verification to combat some of that misinformation that you see on Twitter sometimes. Amplifying the good stuff out there through curation. Using this as yet another new distribution tool in addition to maybe some of the more traditional ones you're still using. Engaging with the audience; two-way conversation. And providing, at least sometimes, that local, specific information that's not possible for local broadcasters to really do at scale in a very large geographical area like Memphis.

At least in April 2011, I looked at what the journalists were tweeting as well as kind of the regular folks. It was still very much of a one-way broadcast model at that point. Very little engagement was going on from the journalist. One exception: We have an independent local meteorologist in Memphis, trained by the National Weather Service. He runs his own website. Interestingly, out of everyone I interviewed, he was the one that talked the most about conversation and engagement. It's kind of hard to do during a big storm when you're watching the radar, but he really made that a top priority. And he found that it was really driving, you know, Twitter was driving a lot of traffic back to his website and really enhancing his credibility and reputation in the community.

And then, you know, sort of as the year went on, when I interviewed the local meteorologists, they had increased since April. More interaction. They were retweeting their followers. There's one local meteorologist. If you give him your address, he'll actually try to tell you exactly what's going on in your location, which you can't really do at scale, but he really feels like he's, you know, enhancing his brand by doing that.

So, non-journalists, if you ask them the role of journalism, not surprising, they talk about verification. Interaction comes up a lot and crowdsourcing using Twitter to kind of get more information. And this is just an example of verification going on. Kind of a nasty, ominous looking cloud over downtown Memphis. A lot of people were tweeting, "Oh, it looks like a tornado." But the independent local meteorologist was able to look at the radar [and] say, "There's no rotation there. Everything's gonna be fine."

So, and this is just, very quickly, this was announced just as I was finishing this paper actually. But the real weather nuts get kind of mad with the hashtag, because it gets clogged up with, you know, spam maybe and boobies and whatnot, but…and also just like non-serious information. So, they were trying for a hashtag very specifically centered on, you know, actual storm-related information. But that was brand-new just a few weeks ago, so I don't have any data on that. So, that's all.

[Applause.]

Jonathan Groves: OK. I can attest to Tom's skill with the ball peen hammer as I was…. [chuckles] Nicest guy in the world. OK. We're going to talk about WellCommons.com today: *Breaking down the barriers between journalists and the community.* (Oh, I did it. You told me not to do that.)

[Some laughter.]

Rosental Calmon Alves: [Inaudible.]

Jonathan Groves: (Oh, all right. Sorry. Did I get it?)

Rosental Calmon Alves: [Inaudible.]

Jonathan Groves: (Oh, because it's not centered. All right. Now we're back.) OK. In the modern age of journalism, you saw a wall erect between journalists and the community. The journalists felt like they needed that wall, that arms-length from the community, in order to cover the community accurately. We've got to be objective. We've got to tell our stories with explanatory stories, trend stories. We can't allow opinions to creep in. But a funny thing happened on the way to objectivity, is we saw our communities get disengaged with us as media, with their investment in their communities and the civic discourse that was going on, that we're supposed to do as journalists. We're supposed to serve as a public forum. The public didn't want to engage.

So, some people started thinking about this in the 1990's with the idea of civic journalism. You had scholar Jay Rosen thinking about these things. Buzz Merritt, of The Wichita Eagle, sought ways to engage the community to get more meaningful election coverage. "What kind of information do *you* want so that we can help you make better decisions as voters and members of the community?” He invited the public into budget meetings, into the journalistic process.

And what’s happened is with the evolution of social media and user-generated content—we’ve seen this in continuing the advertisement for the Participatory Journalism book—is this idea of participatory journalism that invites the community in as partners in the process of journalism. That it becomes more of a conversation. How can we communicate together to cover the community rather than it be one way? How does this become a two-way enterprise that we cover the community together?

In 2009, the Lawrence Journal World in Lawrence, Kansas came up with the idea for niche sites, where they would cover specific issues in the community. The first one of these was WellCommons.com. Jane Stevens, the Director of Media Strategies, thought of this as…. She uses the term *social journalism*, where we have the public and the journalist as partners in covering the community. And what they wanted to do was create a community where everyone identifies themselves and join in the process to cover healthcare issues related to Lawrence.

So, what they did in the summer of 2009, they put together an advisory group of 40 people from the community. Some of these were health professionals. Some of these were just concerned citizens from the community who wanted to participate. And they sought to develop a site where they didn’t distinguish between what content came from the journalist and the community. When you saw a byline, you saw only the name. it didn’t distinguish that it was from the Lawrence Journal World or from the Well Common staff or from Lawrence Memorial Hospital. You just saw the name as a member of the community. And the journalist worked with them to develop the content and design of the site. It wasn’t done in a vacuum.

So, what I wanted to look at in this community, where you build it from the ground up with the journalist and the public, it’s not the kind of thing in civic journalism where we’re saying, “Hey, we have our process. You can come in.” It’s, “We’re going to build it together as a community and a journalist.” So, I wanted to see what types of stories would be contributed in this space between the journalist and the non-journalist. What types of sources would be used? Would there be any difference between the non-journalist and the journalist? And lastly, I wanted to see, how are people interacting on the site? What are they doing? Are they commenting? Are they posting? Are they reposting?

So, the way I did this was with a content analysis. I looked at 705 posts from when the site launched in April 2010 and looked at the various story types. So, what I wanted to do was look at explanatory stories, event stories, and then also look at opinion-type stories that are told in different ways. I also looked at the users from the five largest groups on the site over a two-year period, and I looked at their professions and identities to see what kinds of people were there. I also looked at whether they used a pseudonym or a real name.

And then I looked at their behavior on the site. I looked at the posts, reposts, and comments, and just counted them up to see, how were the different groups behaving on this site? When I looked at the stories, I saw that explanatory stories for both groups was the most common type. This is your traditional journalistic story where we're going to report it, cover it, [and] explain some sort of trend or issue related to healthcare.

The second most common type for the journalist was the event story. This is your breaking news. If there's something going on, we'll preview the event or we'll go to the event, cover it live, have some pictures, maybe a video, maybe we'll tell the story a little bit differently. This was third for the non-journalist.

Second for the non-journalist was the voice/perspective story. And this is the one where it's told from their point of view, often in the first person, often with their opinion laced in there. And what was interesting was this was the third most common story type for journalists. So journalists started telling stories in this non-traditional way.

When I looked at their sources, both groups did depend on your traditional third party sources. Sometimes they were interviews. Sometimes they were links to other sites for their information. The non-journalist tended to rely more on the personal, where there was their personal narrative, their personal expertise, or their personal opinion on something, where they didn't include any other sources in their post. The journalists were more likely to rely on medical professionals and do their traditional journalistic verification task, where they're calling up the experts asking for their information and rewriting that information for the public to consume.

Lastly, I looked at the interactions. This was the most interesting. Because this gets at the idea of, how do you build a community like this where people want to participate? Those who used pseudonyms, typically what they would do is they would only comment. But the people who identified themselves, had much more engaged behavior. They were the ones more likely to post stories and repost stories, which is a deeper behavior than just commenting. Often the people who were commenting with the pseudonyms, they would just give an off-handed comment. They would comment on one or two or three stories and then they would disappear after they had created their identity. Those who identified themselves were much more likely to stay engaged and participate in a variety of ways on the website.

What was interesting about this was that the community realized that now there were no more gatekeepers. That they could fully participate in the co-creation of news. Their opinions mattered. What they thought was news was more important.

And what was interesting was ten power users were responsible for the bulk of interaction of the site. Half of those were journalists; half of those were non-journalists. And what was the most interesting finding to me was that almost a quarter of the interactions on the site over the two-year period were from one journalist at the organization—the health reporter for the Journal World who was responsible for updating and connecting to the site.

What was interesting in the build-up, it also affected the way that she told her stories, because what happened here is in the build-up to Relay for Life, the public was invited to share their stories about Relay for Life. You saw a number of posts that said, "Why I relay," and talking about someone who mattered to them. And she shared in on this and explained why she relays and talked about how she was going to light two luminary at the event—one for her grandfather and one for a woman named Susan, who was a cancer victim that she had written a story about. And she revealed how much that meant to her that this person shared their story. She's breaking down that barrier between the traditional objective journalist and letting people see her as a person, as a member of the community.

When they covered the story, they covered it, they live-blogged it. They included video. They included live posts from the scene. (Am I getting feedback?) And they…. (Oh, what's this? Sorry. There we go.) And so what happened is, when they did the wrap-up story for this, note the use of pronoun in the lead. *We* did it. It wasn't separating arms length from the community. They had become part of the community. They had formed their own team to help raise that $172,000. And why that's interesting is because it helped build this sense of community and build the audience for this group. So, what you had here was the wall came down and journalists became more a part of the community and the community became more like the journalists. And together they built the Well Commons community.

And the reason this is of importance to all of us in this room is that it meant 30,000 unique visitors a month. 130,000 page views in a town of 88,000 people that are engaging on the site in some way. Though there was a connection to the Legacy organization, it shows what's possible by combining a journalist with the community in a truly participatory site. This was one journalist who was responsible for almost a quarter of the interaction on the site and was able to create this kind of engagement.

Thank you for your time.

[Applause.]

Bruce Mutsvairo: OK. Good afternoon, everybody. So, my name is Bruce Mutsvairo. Simon Columbus is a colleague of mine. He's over there. We wrote this, the three of us. Unfortunately, one of our colleagues, Iris, couldn't make it. She got sick just two days before we flew. So obviously, our thoughts are with her.

Anyway, we don't…. As you can see, it's all darkness. We don't really have a PowerPoint presentation. We are pretty backward in Amsterdam. So, just to give you a bit of — just to run down what we actually set out to explore, we were looking at how African journalists or citizen journalists in Africa sort of considered the traditional ethics of journalism. So, how relevant they were to them still in this digital age. So basically, as you can imagine, I mean, in Africa or sub-Saharan Africa, it's one of those areas where much of research is still lacking in this area. And some of the statistics, as you have seen from Professor Harry Dugmore, there's really a lot of to be explored in this area. And so, we were motivated by that.

And obviously if you compare [it] to the Arab region, because of the Arab Spring, you see that there's a lot of interest [in] scientific research in the Middle East since, you know, ever since the Arab Spring sort of occurred. And we probably hope that perhaps sub-Saharan Africa needs its own Spring so that, you know, a lot of scientific researchers will sort of explore or go into this area.

So, our main interest or what we sought to explore was how citizen journalists in sub-Saharan Africa considered how relevant they thought the traditional ethics were. So, what we did was we randomly selected citizen journalists from using the Global Voices websites, and we created a questionnaire, an online questionnaire, and sent out the questionnaire to these citizen journalists. We were interested in knowing their background, whether they actually consider themselves citizen journalists or [if] they consider themselves journalists. Very interestingly, some of them thought they were journalists. Some of them were calling themselves citizen journalists. There's really, as you can imagine, a lot of definitions that are coming out, even debate on what exactly is a citizen journalist.

So, what we asked them was whether all these laws or all what we see in journalism were still relevant to them. And the conclusion basically was that most of the journalists very interestingly felt that the ethics of journalism were still very relevant to them. This was quite something that we had not expected, because most of the citizen journalists that we know where we live certainly think or consider the ethics of journalism as really not very important, because they see this as an open-space environment. They don't want to sort of adhere to these principles.

But the journalists that we spoke to — the citizen journalists, I beg your pardon — actually considered most of the traditional ethics as we know them. Like, we theoretically looked at the Four Theories of Press from Siebert et all. So, we're trying to position this region of sub-Saharan Africa. About 20 citizen journalists from Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe responded to our cause. And all of them, like I've already said, felt that citizen journalism —

despite citizen journalism or what we were seeing in citizen journalism, they still considered the ethics of journalism as very, very relevant to the work that they did.

We were also trying to find out [about] The Networked Public Sphere from Habermas, because we actually feel that it's emerging. What is very distinctive about this region is that there isn't really much of the organized websites, such as The Huntington Post. Like, we have the Ushahidi, something that came out just after the political instability in Kenya in 2007. It's quite unique, but you don't really get to see a lot of these sites. I mean, you see a lot of citizen journalists who are really — who consider themselves [to be journalists] who adhere to the social responsibility theory of press, who think that it's important to be objective, who still think that it's important to minimize harm. But at the same time, these people are not really organized in some sort, which was our conclusion.

And I guess it's ten minutes. Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

J. Richard Stevens: OK. In my work, I've been studying for a few years different aspects of privacy, and in particular, the ways in which our privacy norms in society are connected to and influenced by developments in technology. So first, I wanted to start off talking about — kind of backing into the problem I'm looking at here, which is this paradox we have about the ways in which we express privacy. Study after study after study show that Americans are generally concerned about their data privacy, but that they do actually very little to protect their data. The Jupiter Study that is cited up there from 2002 talks about some extensive survey data that said, "70% of Americans are concerned about their privacy online, but only 40% of them even bother to read privacy disclosures when they are signing up for services of when they are connecting to that space." And that kind of creates this paradox, where we keep saying that we're very concerned about something that we do very little to safeguard or protect.

And then, of course, continually as these controversies grow, attitudes and behaviors adjust despite the loud cries that happen at the time. So, we're seeing this slow adjusting of values that consistently are happening because of technological development.

So first, I wanted to start by talking about how privacy is defined and how it's not defined. Because one of the largest problems in this area of study is that there are so many different competing definitions. And part of that in some of my earlier work was I had rather determined that it's because we usually only define privacy in reaction to what we don't like about the new technologies that are emerging. As man gains abilities and the ability to see things that previously he or she had not been able to, we quite quickly have this controversy where we say our privacy is being violated. And in that moment, we define privacy in a new way. This is kind of a moving target. It's not something that we had in the beginning. It's kind of a reactive process, a kind of ritual that we have.

And so, I had kind of talked about, in my work, about how privacy controversies are often these kind of routinized moral panics. They're our struggle to adapt to technological developments of our age. So, one of the things that we have to understand about the ways in which people make decisions concerning their privacy in all context—offline, online, and everything in between—is that context serves as the biggest mitigating factor, the biggest variable in what we decide to do. You know, when we talk about, for example, cell phone privacy, we talk differently in an elevator than we do in a bathroom than we do outside than we do in our home. The context by which we engage in these interactions is the single biggest determining factor for what we choose to say or not say, what we choose to disclose or not disclose.

Online, though, we're starting to see a new area of problems emerge, because this context is communicated often through the interface of the tools that we have, and that context is designed in a space that doesn't often physically exist. And so, this is what I'm digging down to—are the aesthetics and the affordances and the ways in which this context is communicated.

So, I wanted to come at that talking about how in our classic HCI research that some of my colleagues do, is that we've usually been talking about usability in a very particular way, in a very positive way. Usability is seen as the ability for a user to effectively use tools to get their goals met. And so typically when we talk about good interface versus bad interface, we're talking about how easy was someone able to achieve their goals, or what obstructions or what unnecessary complexity exists in the interface? But recently, several scholars have started to notice that this kind of assumes that the purpose of interface is to help a user meet their goal. And so what happens when we get into an environment where that may not be the case? In other words, interfaces sometimes can mislead intentionally or unintentionally. And so, I've started kind of looking at interfaces in the degree to which they communicate place, the way that they put presentations and interpretations forward, how they communicate to users.

So, to put it really simply, what I'm looking at in this paper, I'm going to be looking at social readers, but we're seeing a situation in which the interface design, because of Apple and Google and the increasing aesthetics of simplicity, are trying to use this easy-to-use metaphor to encourage confidence and performance. At the same time, the backend architecture is getting increasingly complicated. There's a lot of data being collected outside of the view of the user creating these architectures of vulnerability. We're leaving data trails all over the place as we go through our lives. Some of which we know about; some of which we don't. Add that to the fact that there is a relatively low user digital literacy component at work here. Most users of Facebook, for example, in study after study, don't understand what's being collected, don't understand how it's being stored, and don't understand how that data's being used. And so, you wind up with this situation, this gulf between the ways in which tools appear to work and how they actually work. And that's what I have spent some time digging into on various platforms and various devices. But what I'm….

Oh, so before we talk about the actual tool, these disconnections are really significant, because to most end-users, interface is the product. What's happening in the backend is removed from their view. They don't have a separate perception the way that designers do about the front-end and the backend of the architectures they interact with. So as far as the user is concerned, the interface is the product, and that creates these gulfs of interpretation. What I think is happening when I'm interacting with a tool may not be what's actually happening, but most users don't even stop to consider that as a possibility.

So, what I'm looking at are tools. The Social Reader, which of course are using the Open Graph software that was released last year, this "frictionless sharing" idea. The fact that we can tie web interfaces back with social networking platforms, that we can keep consistence and perpetual connections between the two. That was introduced last year, and we've seen just an explosion of especially news content online. Just in the first nine weeks you can see how much traffic was suddenly generated. But I wanted to dig into the interface. This is the kind of standard way in which Open Graph and other Facebook API applications use. They give you an informed…. You have a kind of tacit informed consent by being told, "Here are some things that are going to happen." And of course as simply as possible, we present these choices as you are opting in.

I wanted to really briefly, before we look at the actual tool that I was looking at, talk about why aesthetics are important. And in the paper, I spent a lot of time looking both at offline and online architecture, showing how this communication of place, this communication of context has dramatic effect by whether people say or don't say things, what they think of as their setting, etc. This is not insignificant.

So, this is an example. This is The Washington Post Social Reader. Of course, when you get that, you also get Mashable and a lot of the other pieces that go with that. I've also looked at The Huffington Post and some others. So, this interface, in particular, I was looking at because you have some very interesting affordances that don't communicate to the user quite clearly what's happening. So, what happens is, I'm on Facebook. I see an article someone has read. And would I like to read it? I click on it. And I'm presented with this dialogue box, which tells me this is about to happen. OK, read article or cancel? And of course, already as a designer, my head's starting to pull apart, because I'm having to think about, "OK, read article" means install software, broadcast my choices, start my social reading. I'm about to start broadcasting everything I do. Cancel actually takes me to the article on the webpage. So, that's what my choices are. What's actually my choices literally on the backend are, "Install or go to the web," but what I'm being told is, "OK, read or cancel." This is the way that's presented.

Then, of course, there's also when you get down to that use of the word "may." I always love this in all of them. They're all a little bit this way. "This app *may* post on your behalf including articles you read and more," which of course probably intended to be, "This article is getting permission to," but it sounds like it might or might not happen, which is part of what's going on here. So, once I click that and I see that, suddenly, everything I start reading shows up in all of these various spaces across the web mixed in with my feed. It is very common online to see people react negatively to this surprise.

And so, what I'm basically getting to in analyses like these is, increasingly, HCI folks are starting to ask whether or not interfaces have a responsibility to communicate in a responsible manner what the choices are. In some of these cases, so you can kind of see this laid out, what we're talking about, tools like this, whether it was intentional or not, are contributing to this problem, where interface tells users — gives users one set of choices, which then of course opt you into lots of other choices that you may or may not be making or may or may not be aware of. Usually with the case of our less literate usage groups, suddenly it's surprising what Facebook does or doesn't have when that gets revealed.

So, there's quite a bit more embedded in the conclusion of that, but running out of my one minute. I'll go ahead and stop here. So…[chuckles].

[Applause.]

Lawrie Zion: Yeah. Just a personal disclosure before I start. Like Carrie, I've got two chocolate Labradors, but I didn't actually manage to get them into my PowerPoint presentation. [laughter] So, I know their watching moose elk. I'm really, really sorry. OK? All right.

This is an email I got from a student nearly three years ago after a class I'd done on copyright and the ethics of attribution in a subject I teach called Dilemmas in Journalism. I think you can see from it, it's not particularly elegantly written. "I have started a blog and while I was researching some information for some of my posts i came across a youtube video on a site. It wasnt from the actual youtube site but it was a youtube video. i posted the video onto my blog. Is this alright?" [sic] Now, I actually think that even though that's not particularly well written, it speaks volumes about the challenges that we now face as journalism educators when it comes to especially law and ethics curricula in journalism degree programs. And I think it also sheds light on broader changes for journalism as well.

We all know, I think, that the proliferation of online media has kind of complicated the practice of journalism ethics. And I think, you know, while you can say that traditional ethical principles don't actually fundamentally change when information is disseminated online, the application of codes across a range of platforms is actually becoming increasingly challenging.

And you can see how this question gets framed in all sorts of places at the moment. This is just one I happened to find on a Columbia Journalism Review report on magazines and their websites. "Is it true, as one respondent confidently asserted, 'If it's fact-checked, it's not a blog,' and is this existential definition or definitional question? The issue is an important one because so many in the blogosphere insist that the blogs have (and are entitled to) their own rules of the road." Subject for discussion: "Why have earlier attempts at standardizing the world of blogs and social media notoriously failed? Is it, at long last, possible to identify best practices for using the tools and techniques of digital journalism?" Well, is it indeed.

This paper is really an exploration of how attempts to address these questions are unraveling both in Australia, where the discussion about online ethics has been infused by a very lively debate we're still having, provoked by a recent federal government inquiry into media accountability, and it's also happening in North America, where I think the potential and pitfalls of online media have been explored with even greater urgency in response to the relatively rapid decline in traditional business models for print.

So, just a couple of things about Australia. I'm going to argue it's similar but different. A couple of things though that just might be worth pointing out. Australia, although it's the same size in landmass area as the 48 states, has a population slightly less than Texas, which a lot of people don't realize. And I think it's significant if we're looking at the scale of media in Australia. That's one thing to keep in mind. And also, we have a very high degree of print concentration. 70% of the circulation, around that figure, is news corporation newspapers. I think you're all aware Rupert Murdoch is from Australia. And the other — another 16% is from another major media company, Fairfax. And so, I think that, yeah, so…. Sorry.

Yeah. So, there's no really specific application to online platforms when it comes to media ethics, other than those operated by media organizations, that one way or another are party to one of the existing codes. And the media inquiry, which was really focusing on print, ended up, you know, commenting about this absence and ended up also recommending that Australia establish a new government-funded statutory authority in order to improve regulation of the media. And the conclusion there—quite a profound one—is that self-regulation in the media isn't really working. And in a way, by implication, online media is kind of seen as part of the problem.

So, what happened in this inquiry? Well, nothing as kind of lurid as we've seen in the Leveson Inquiry in the UK. It was found in Australia. But I think that the solution, the so-called solution to the issue of self-regulation really illustrates, I think, Stephen Ward's contention that we're living in the middle of a crisis in journalism ethics. And it's actually, according to Stephen, the fifth crisis.

So anyway, why the term 'best practices' and how might this actually help? I've actually noticed over the last two or three years that best practice has been used with a lot more frequency in discussions about online media in North America. And it's been used in the context of both ethical and practical issues. And you see it regularly in sites such as Media Shift, 10,000 Words, Regret the Error, which is now on Pointer, and in reports from organizations trying to grapple with the challenges raised by online media practice. And while the details of the challenges vary, some common questions that are actually underpinning the discussions are:

What are the limitations of traditional codes and standards for new media formats?

How should ethics be understood in an environment where increasing numbers of content producers are not journalists?

And who should be involved in actually developing ethical norms?

And just a quick quote here from the Center for Social Media's report on best practices in digital journalism in and outside U.S. public broadcasting: "Best practices is more than a buzz phrase. In any professional sector of industry, researchers commonly identify a set of activities, principles, themes, norms, or routines that appear to aid industry members in meeting common challenges or achieving shared goals."

And in this particular paper, what I've done is I've looked at five case studies that examine really best practice principles in a range of different contexts. What I'd argue though is that they're all really—(thanks, five minutes)—that they're all really attempts to be part of the process, I think, of the regeneration of journalism through engagement with issues relating to best practices.

So, the five include two from the Canadian Association of Journalists on unpublishing and digital errors and corrections. And two from the Center for Social Media at the American University in D.C. looking at fair use in copyright and also in the area of public broadcasting. And some features I've found from looking at these case studies is that they all identify emerging situations. In each instance, the case studies are actually attempting to address moving targets in terms of what's changing in the media. They share findings. You see all their actual reports online and the rationale behind them. They foster collaboration. None of these projects could have been realized solely through the expertise of a single group. They suggest rather than prescribe. Problems are being addressed and discussed, rather than actually solved. It's a work in progress. They're consultative. All these projects use expertise and engagement with communities to develop guidelines. They enhance media literacy. The reports are designed to provide guidelines to journalists and other content producers that will improve interactions with users and audiences. And they regenerate. The case studies connect back to the practices link to the tradition of exploring journalism ethics. And they do this by going through emerging practices.

And the other thing is, in the study, I also looked at two case studies from Australia. Although they weren't named as 'best practice' studies, they looked at the reporting of diversity and the reporting of suicide. And they also fulfilled most of these kind of characteristics of the case studies in the North American examples.

So, I think that I'll just skip over this. But what's the actual utility of the best practice framed here? I think the connotations of the term 'best practices' is quite interesting, because for people who are reading these and writing these, I think they mean both a manner of professional self-interest to journalists—it's not simply a moral requirement that you follow best practices—but I also think that in some ways, by looking at the application of ethical principles in new situations, they're kind of facilitating an 'ethics plus' rather than an 'ethics light,' especially if they're embedded in a range of practices that apply ethical principles. And this is really important at a time when so many people producing content are not coming out of journalism schools, are not coming out of traditional media.

So, where does it get us? Where does the use of best practices actually get us? To me, from looking at these six reports, I think that they have the capacity to facilitate a more global and open approach to doing ethics. They offer the potential for collaboration. And I think here there's real potential for transnational research that involves the academy and the industry. I think digital accuracy and corrections we saw in the Canadian case could be applied in Australia. And I think in the Australian case as well that our report into — the reporting of suicide could actually be used. A lot of things in this, of course, are contingent on context. But also I think that in some ways an opportunity exists through looking at best practices to start to globalize some of these discussions as well.

And just in conclusion, I think it's especially important going back to the first slide we saw, the note from my student, that in journalism education we really need to intersect with the way that students are actually using the media. And I think that in this case as well, we can see how simply teaching ethics in the traditional way needs to be supplemented by looking at how people are using — how people are developing their own best practices and bringing them to the table in discussion about where to go from here.

Thanks.

[Applause.]

<u>Question & Answer Session:</u>

Tom Johnson: Well, I was curious with Carrie, have you seen the…? I mean, you kind of created a community through the Memstorm. Have you seen it continue for, I mean, later things or was it just short-term?

Carrie Brown: I think it does. I think it does kind of continue on, at least to a certain extent. I mean, you did see with the Memflood hashtag, which was later that same year, people came back and were still talking about stuff. You know, it certainly is not…. You know, Memphis is a pretty large city. I don't think everyone is necessarily on Twitter and using this, but it's a pretty consistent segment of the population. Twitter explodes even after stuff like a major school board meeting. We had a big school consolidation thing. So yeah, I think it has kind of carried on beyond just these breaking news events.

Tom Johnson: Looks like we have a question.

Woman: Hey. This is a question about Well Commons. I work for a mental health foundation doing communication, so your presentation caught my interest. We've been talking a lot at our organization about how to connect better with our audience. How do you think a site like Well Commons might benefit a foundation?

Jonathan Groves: The community foundation that Marilyn Hall was one of the…. She was one of the top ten posters on the site, and she is a very invested member of that community and was part of the advisory board and helped decide that. So, I think if you could…. There are possibilities of partnering with a journalistic organization if you get enough players involved and create that sense of community. It helped that they would connect with these events like the Relay for Life to build mass around it. There was another one that I highlight in the paper but not on the slides, where they do this day of…. I forget. It was the world's biggest fitness day, where they had like a thousand people all get in a field and all workout together. And they did that. Well Commons connected with these events in town, so that people would say, "What's this Well Commons thing?" So, it'd reach out beyond it. And it wasn't just the journalist. It was the journalist and these community foundations. So, I think there's a real opportunity if you can get enough partners.

Woman: Thank you.

Tom Johnson: I was curious. You talk about using the best practices frame. I wasn't quite clear. Could you give some more examples of perhaps what are some elements that may be part of that frame?

Lawrie Zion: Yeah, I think if you looked at, say, in the Canadian Association of Journalists, the one on digital corrections, the ethic is really we shall correct errors. But the best practices discussion that they bring up is, well, how do you do it? It's not like the same as a correction. And I think that all of these six reports I look at are very discursive. They're not actually trying to create the final word on anything. They're saying, "This is all changing, but we've identified these particular things as being part of it." So, I'm not advocating just the term being used in every situation, but I think that collectively what all these reports seem to do is to open up the discussion about: Here's the principle. What do we do with it? How do we take it to the next stage? And who do we include in the process of deciding where that's going to go? And as far as I can tell…. Have we got anyone here from the Canadian Association of Journalists? The two reports…. Ah, at the back.

Tom Johnson: We do! Wow!

Lawrie Zion: Fantastic! Well, you know, as far as I can tell, correct me if I'm wrong, the two reports they've done on unpublishing and corrections are really, you know, done separately to anything that might have come out of the Center for Social Media, which has done a whole lot of best practice reports. Certainly, the reports in Australia were not connected in any way. So, we're seeing similar kinds of developments emerge in different contexts, but the interesting thing is they're trying to do the same kind of thing. Does that answer your question?

Tom Johnson: OK. Yes. Bruce, do you see anything? I mean, certainly you talked about ethics also. Do you see anything different in the African situation than Lawrie talked about?

Bruce Mutsvairo: Well, I think you get to see a lot of similarities. And I think I completely agree with Lawrie when he says, I think, at the moment, we cannot just wait and talk about the traditional sense of ethics. I think it's about time, indeed, that we have to sort of embed the digital, you know, requirements for ethics. Because, obviously, it's a completely different environment.

Lawrie Zion: Yeah.

Bruce Mutsvairo: I think things are changing.

Lawrie Zion: One thing I'd just add to that, too, is I think in the Australian media inquiry, to some extent online is part of the problem; whereas, I think if you start looking at practices online, best practices online, as being a kind of potential solution to what's been happening with ethical frameworks, then I think you actually do progress where we're actually going to get with things like attribution, accountability, and those sorts of things. And, you know, I think that's in a sense what hasn't happened yet really in Australia—that online is still bundled up, but we haven't really looked at it. It's not really…. You know, we've got to figure out a way to do it. Who's going to look after it? But in fact, you know, in some respects, the states are actually improving. Ethical practices come out of the discussion of best practices, I think.

Tom Johnson: All right. Angela.

Angela: Hi. So, my name is Angela. I'm interested in ethics as well. But I was wondering if we can talk about, when we think about best practices for when we talk about ethics, whom are we talking about? And does it differ for the audience as opposed to journalists?

Lawrie Zion: Yeah. Look, I think that that's a hugely important question, because a lot of the discussion in Australia has really kind of gone back to, you know, the journalists will decide this. It's up to us. But in fact I think that it's also a real digital literacy challenge as well, because so many people are producing content. I mean, that, in a way…. Although she's a journalism student, that particular student who sent me that note, it's kind of typical when I ask people when they come in their first year, you know, "Who uses YouTube? Who runs blogs?" A lot of them do. And I think that's really in a sense what journalism education can possibly contribute outside of just the profession of journalism—articulating how, you know, best practices can be formed. I think there's a connotation issue with the term as well, because if you were to say to a lot of people who are not from the journalism system, if you like, "Here's the ethics that you should subscribe to," I think it's a kind of turnoff factor. Whereas, if you say, "Here are the best practices. It includes how to be a good journalist, and it also includes some ideas about the best way to do things." In a sense, that's a more inclusive approach. So, that's where I think, you know, a lot of best practices is for, to come into the mix.

Angela: If I may just ask a follow-up question.

Tom Johnson: You may.

Angela: I guess my question is more about, so we have commercial journalism in the U.S., and even though I understand that most of us are ethical and care about ethics, but what about for organizations [who] aim to make profit as opposed to really make news or journalism? How do we convince them that the best practice is actually good for them as well?

Lawrie Zion: Trust. Because I think that journalism defines ethics is a practice that leads to trust. Another really interesting sort of thing to come out of our media inquiry, our national broadcast of the ABC, which has the most transparent guidelines about best practices, is also the most trusted. And I think that, you know, in Australia, as in a lot of other parts of the world, a lot of commercial media just isn't really trusted. So, when people say things like, "The market will decide," they've also got to think, "If people trust us, is there going to actually be a better relationship with audiences

[and] readers? And are we actually going to be able to take them with us into the next stage of new platforms?"

Angela: Thank you.

Lawrie Zion: Thanks.

Tom Johnson: All right. Mark.

Mark Coddington: Mark Coddington, University of Texas. I have a question for Richard on privacy. I thought there were a couple of interesting ideas that sort of intersected in your presentation. One was the idea that privacy panics are kind of these routinized reactions to a failure to adapt to new technology. And then we saw in this case with the Facebook social, you know, the social reading apps that there's actually what appears to be some deception going on that's sort of baked into the interface. So, I'm wondering, where did they intersect in this case, where we have maybe a potentially — you know, not really based in the actual practices, but more a failure to adapt, but we actually have some concern over something that seems, you know, less than wholesome behavior here by the people who are making the apps.

J. Richard Stevens: Yeah. So, there's a lot of different ways I could answer that question. So on the first hand, just dealing with the effects of it, when we see controversies arise like this, like when Facebook implemented newsfeeds, you know, there's always a resulting controversy that later becomes the norm. You know, you see those attitudes shift. So from the user end, if I were to say to some of these companies, "Well, that seems to be a little bit deceptive, and you're misleading people," the answer might be, "Well, yeah, but it'll be normal in a few months. So, everybody will adapt. People will complain. They will sign petitions. They will be upset. And then in six months, that'll be the new normal. The bubble moves and we go on from there." However, you know, this is part of my concern. I mean, you illustrated that. It's in the very architecture of the interface between me and my device. There are choices that are being pushed to me and choices that are being taken away from me.

And a lot of times what concerns me is when we talk about the rhetoric of privacy, we talk about how, "Well, if users want to protect their data, they can," and then, "if they know about it, and if they know what's happening, and if they are given the tools." We're given lots of tools, but not always the ability or even the knowledge or the literacy to use them. So, I kind of see this as a problem that's going to exacerbate over time, because we keep looking up and saying, "Hey, how did...?" The controversy from a few weeks ago, the Girls Around Me app, you know, that was coming out of Apple's interface that was tapping into the location feeds out of Facebook that was then allowing people who had checked in to be displayed by gender according to their proximity to you, which caused a lot of alarm, and Facebook shut that down. But that's the other problem going on here is a lot of these tools are really open in terms of how their APIs are being distributed. And as a result, we are usually shocked by, "How did my data get used this way? I don't understand. When did I agree to that?" And in reality, we did, you know, because usually behind that simple interface or 18 pages of really small type, you know, that we don't read as we check [boxes]. We check so many boxes and don't actually read what those boxes correspond to. But on the other hand, in six months, we don't care anymore as a group, because we don't recognize.

Tom Johnson: OK. Yes, Alfred.

Alfred Hermida: Thank you to Carrie and to Jonathan for the plug for Participatory Journalism. It's a great read. [laughter]

Jonathan Groves: Yeah.

Alfred Hermida: But this is a question really for both of them. Particularly, Carrie talked about some of the Memstorm messages being more emotional in tone, and certainly with WellCommon, you had more personal sources. So, my question is, how far — if people are getting emotional messages, how does that affect the understanding and impact of an event? And how does it affect who they may trust or feel a connection with as a news source?

Carrie Brown: Yeah. I mean, I definitely noticed a lot of that. And I don't know if I have a very.... I mean, it was sort of difficult to kind of empirically pull that down out of it, but I do get the sense that that really contributed very powerfully to kind of the sense of community. And that the journalists that were more kind of successful and engaging were the ones that were sort of willing to, like Jonathan found, I mean, you know, engage on more of that personal level. I mean, it's a mix. Obviously, you're still providing the news and information, but, you know, you're able to say, "Oh, wow, I'm sorry that tree fell on your house." I mean, there is just more of that, you know, that kind of conversational tone to it, I think. I don't know.

Jonathan Groves: Yeah, that sounds about what I would say, is that you saw this, especially in the case of Carrie, that people started to see her as a person, rather than as the institution. And I think that change in thinking, seeing the pictures, seeing their profile, and seeing how personal her profile and her storytelling is, gave a little more weight to how the community perceived her and their willingness to participate with her. Because in that lead up to Relay for Life, not only were there people writing their own essays, what Carrie would do is she would actually interview people and do a traditional profile like you would expect in the newspaper. But it was people who weren't comfortable writing, who weren't comfortable, but they wanted to tell their own stories, and she facilitated that participation. And I think they felt a little more comfortable with her, because they knew her rather than the institution.

Tom Johnson: All right. Thank you. It’s hard to believe, but our time is already up.

Rosental Calmon Alves: Yes.

Tom Johnson: And I’d like to give one more thanks to our panelists. Some great discussion, great points. I thank you very much!

[Applause.]