Participatory Culture

– How Social Media Active Journalists Make Use of the Medium

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Abstract

As new platforms are developed for communicating, the everyday lives of many are changed at the grounds. The aim with this study was to map the changes in routines when it comes to journalists making news and communicating with their readers, audience and sources after the introduction of social media in their work process. By making a qualitative study analyzing logbooks and interviews of a handful of responding journalists I tried to find what the thoughts were behind the routines of the journalistic work process and why and how they've changed. The most obvious change this research has found was that the speed of today's flow of information has made an impact on both how the respondents gather information and regard their sources. My research is in many ways complimentary to earlier research made with the same starting point but the findings are a bit different. While my research shows that the dialog between producer and consumer is increasing and is sought after, other studies have failed to make this conclusion.

Keywords: Twitter, Facebook, social media, journalists, journalism, news making, routines, interviews.

Introduction/Background

Entering a world of digital socializing

The year was 1874 when the first patent was registered for an invention called a telephone by Alexander Graham Bell. The first phone call made in Sweden was in 1877 between the state phone company and Grand Hotel in Stockholm (Rietz du, 2011). Today the year is 2012; some 135 years after this ground breaking historic moment that one might say changed the world completely. Before the telephone, people relied on face-to-face conversation or telegrams and mail correspondence for communicating with each other. The news came printed in news papers and the radio made an evolutionary step first after the invention of the telephone (Helsinki University, 2005). In short, the national and international conversation was limited, for lack of a better word.

Many things have happened the last 100 years. The television made an impact with it's first ever broadcast in 1928. The show *The Queen's Messenger* was broadcasted from a studio in New York to a whopping number of 4 television sets. In 1956 the Swedish government stated they would start broadcasting TV (Helsinki University, 2005) and the Internet started to take form in Sweden in 1984. The motto was to make this new medium flexible in contrast to the traditionally inflexible mediums. The hope was that developers and users would to form their own meaning of the medium (Hamngren et al, 2009). The initial idea was that the internet was to be a platform for communication between connected users. A grass root evolution more or less depending on the interest from users, organizations and developers. This turned out to really work and the new medium pretty much exploded in size and has gotten bigger and gained more and more influence on our lives and our society since (Hamngren et al, 2009). Today you could use internet for all the above and with all mobile platforms there's really no end to the possibilities. This is much thanks to the individuals willing to develop the medium. The medium has fundamentally changed the way we, who are connected, see the world. When you don't know it, Google it. When you do something remarkable, or brutally ordinary, Tweet it. When you have a party coming up, or when you just got home from one, put everything about it on Facebook and since the last couple of years if you could think of it there's probably an app for it.

This evolution in how we, as human beings being part of a high-tech international society, are connecting and communicating with each other has of course changed the way media and journalists communicate with their audience. This is the focus for my theses: I would like to shed light on how a journalist that are at the frontline when it comes to using social media is using it in their work process in Sweden today. It is important to study in every way possible how a professional journalist is dealing with technology. How he or she does this reflects how he or she looks on the overall production of news and the moral behind it. This in turn helps to define and redefine the profession and the works behind journalism.

The technology part in this evolution is though just a small part of the story. Marshall McLuhan talked about how the medium is the message, how the world of thoughts and actions is formed around everything we use and social media is a new medium of which, in this case journalists working with it, has to reflect upon how and to what purpose he or she uses it.

The importance of being correct; to protect sources and to stay true to what's been learned about journalistic ethics is harder to keep in such a rapid world that is of today for journalists. Finding earlier research on this subject is still kind of tricky, at least if you are looking on social media and has Sweden as the area of research. There is some but it needs complimentary research and this is one of the other reasons that I feel my research to be important. More on this later on.

My hypotheses is that social media effectively can, and most certainly has, changed the aspect of the traditional routines involved in news making for some groups of journalists. Social media is a medium of quickness, closeness and dialog. Twitter, Facebook and other platforms becomes tools that shorten the process on finding news material (ideation), sources to interview and to grasp the audience for which the journalist produces news.

Research questions and method

The research questions are focused on both practicalities such as how and when the respondents use social media but they are also constructed in hopes to find a more deeper meaning and the question of why they use it and what parts in the news making routines has changed since the entry of social media in their work life, this to show what's going on behind what we read in our daily news. The questions I work with are:

- How, when and why, do these journalists, with special interest in the web, choose to use social media in their work process?
- What platforms of social media are used?
- Does the use of social media change the responding journalist's relation to their sources?
- Are there any changes in their daily routines since they began using social media?
- How do the respondents look upon journalism and journalists in general and in regards to web- and social media usage?

These questions helped form the interviews and the model for my respondent's logbooks and the findings will be presented in connection to the presentation of the results and in the finishing discussion.

The method of observe, ask and analyze

The method of choice for this research has been logbook analysis and qualitative interviews. A number of journalists constructed a log over all their professional social media activity during a stated time frame. These logs along with the interviews helped the research to be as reliable as possible.

First of all the question of "Whom to ask?" became important for the research: should the focus be on the broader spectrum of the journalistic workforce to find patterns throughout all groups; web-active/web-passive, male/female, young/old, left handed/right handed etcetera? Or should the focus be on individuals who is known to use the Internet and are active on social media to get the most elaborate answers to the question on how and why? In the end the best choice seemed to be a purposive sampling, described by Alan Bryman; the "Goal with a purposive sampling is to chose case/participants in a strategic way so that the sampled respondents are relevant for the research questions formulated" (Bryman, 2011:392).

This kind of sampling, Bryman defines, is not used to make a generalization about a certain issue but to make a relevant selection to get the most out of the research (Bryman, 2011).

I decided to go with the web-active journalists, as far as that was possible, and further I sorted them up on gender and medium in which they'd work (TV, radio, newspaper). The tricky part now was to figure out which journalists were active social media-users. I started with scanning Twitter, following tweets to see who tweeted a lot. Then I looked in to

specializations, what they were writing about, to see if I could find any expert on the subject of social media and finally, as time went by, I used recommendations and contacts to find people with time to spare. What I ended up with was for the research a fairly representative circle of people in regards to the purposive selection with different experiences and backgrounds. The first respondent willing to participate in the research was Lena Nävelsö, a reporter/editor for a local paper in the town of Landskrona. Secondly Anders Thoresson said yes, an IT and telecom freelance writer that also gives lectures on how to use social media as a way to do external environment monitoring. The third was Filip Struwe, a TV reporter from Swedish national public service television (SVT) that 2011 started a blog- and webcast project within SVT: s website. The fourth was Christoffer Wendick, a local TV reporter with many years of journalistic experience but just a couple of months being active in social media. Lastly Parisa Khakuei, a news reporter on Swedish public radio (SR), said yes to do the log, this in a rather late stage after a couple of misfortunate drop-outs. More detailed presentations will be made on all of the respondents later on.

The approach

The question asked was if the respondents would be able to write a log over their professional social media use during one week and if they, after doing this, could be interviewed with questions regarding their usage and general ideas on the subject of the web and social media.

The log

The analysis of logbooks performed during the timeframe of the research is a method rarely seen and a method that would add reliability to the research. Alan Bryman talks about a structured and a more free form of logbook (Bryman, 2011). A structured one is more like a questionnaire with well structured questions and rules on how to write and construct the log. This can for example effectively show cross-cultural differences when it comes to how someone uses their time (Bryman, 2011). The free form of logbook leaves a lot to the respondent to form answers without more than pointers on what to think about. This will have the effect that broader patterns could be analyzed but it comes with the problem that the coding will be difficult and comprehensive (Bryman, 2011). For this research something in-between these two forms were used. Although the logs were supposed to be quite free in form

and shape, the respondents got a template with pointers and questions they would to think about during the week they were keeping the log.

After the respondents had agreed to take part in the research they all got an e-mail with a PDF explaining how they would to keep the logbook. In the template was also stated that in this research the theory of journalism as a process follows these steps when it comes to producing news:

1. Ideation

2. First research

3. Limitation

4. Second research

5. Selection

6. Production

7. Publication

8. Marketing

There is really little explanation to be made about the different steps. In a way they are self explanatory. The first four steps is about getting an idea, getting facts, finding out what holds and how big the story in the end is supposed to be. The last three steps is the process of limiting yourself to the now set plan, producing the journalistic material, publish it in the medium you have the privilege to work in and market the story, getting it out to as many as possible.

With this in mind the respondents were to log: If, in what way and why they in any way chose to use a social medium. It was pointed out that this model were to be used freely and in effect only were meant to steer the respondents in the right direction. If they didn't agree to the way of defining the journalistic work process or if they had anything else to say they were free to point this out in their final log.

The logs were hoped to give a more representative and accurate view over the respondents social media use but the time spent logging and the relatively small number of journalists that were willing to participate in the end gave the log a more complimentary role to the interviews that in fact became the main source of information. More on this follows next.

Interviews

As mentioned earlier the logging in the end wouldn't be enough. The log is an excellent way of finding how respondents actually use something but it comes with many reliability issues. Is what they are logging really true? How much of the social media use is made to make the log more interesting? Is this week of logging actually a typical week? And so on. These are just some immediate questions that are raised. To make this research more valid, reliable and broader the time spent following the respondents would have to be longer. Instead of just having the journalists logging one week of social media use they should maybe have done it for a month or two to get really reliable facts. To outweigh this, the logs were complemented with qualitative interviews and one field observational study to find the answers to the research questions.

All of the respondents got similar questions on the same subject. The written questions were few to make the most of the interviews, they were there to keep the conversation in the right direction but the respondents were able to talk freely and this allowed me as a researcher to improvise questions to get the best answers. This follows the guidelines stated in Jan Trost's book about qualitative interviews (2010). The interviews were tried to be kept inside the same timeframe of 30 minutes. This timeframe could have been extended but the sheer question of time put a stop to that. Every interview was recorded and then transcribed in Swedish, a process taking approximately four hours per interview plus the hour of preparation and recording.

As mentioned earlier the interviews became the most elaborate source of information. The logs were good pointers in showing if what the journalists said in the interviews really corresponded with how they really worked.

A last contribution to make the research as complete as possible I went to spend a day with a news desk focused on web based journalism. The main idea behind this was to, with my own eyes, see how a news desk specialized on social media interaction in fact were using it. It was

a kind of ethnographic observational study performed in the essence of the way Alan Bryman describes it, but during a much shorter time (Bryman, 2011). I spent one day at SVT observing every part of the work day/work process of the news desk called *Nyhetslabbet*. During the day mini interviews were conducted with the reporters to get comments on why they did as they did. The whole thing was complimented by an interview with the project leader following the same questions given to the respondents.

Reliability and validity

Alan Bryman (2011) recognizes there to be differences between quantitative and qualitative methods regarding the way to look at validity and reliability. Bryman presents two basic criteria set up by E.G Guba and Y.S Lincoln, to evaluate qualitative research: *Trustworthiness* and *Authenticity* (Bryman, 2011).

Trustworthiness is broken down to: *credibility* (internal validity), *transferability* (external validity)*, dependability* (reliability) and *conformability* (objectivity)*.

I will focus on these different alternative ways of defining the terms in qualitative research to make the most of them defending the reliability and validity of the research.

The research is credible because of the selection of respondents along with the presentation of in which terms and milieus my research is done. The selection isn't random and the aim has been to set the research in a context in which it is not supposed to be in any way contradictive. This means also that the research should be transferable, not perhaps between different areas of research but at least in time and context. One could do the exact same research in two years time and get different results. There are areas in which the research could have problems with the dependability issue. Although I try to define all the steps and theories behind the research one could ask if the logbook is at all representative to give an accurate picture over the respondent's actual use of social media. It is set during a short amount of time and without much framework for the respondents to hold on to. This is why the logbook is complimented with qualitative interviews and an observational study. These three sources to gather facts from in the end actually gives a pretty accurate view of how the journalistic work process might have evolved for the respondents, in what way they do things today and what goes on in their heads regarding social media in a broad sense. About the question of conformability and authenticity, I haven't had anything else than the hypotheses that could have had an effect

on the research. Every method, theory and respondent is weighed and measured for most thorough and accurate research.

Earlier research

A pilot study similar to this research has been conducted on sports journalist's use of social media in Minnesota (Reed, 2011). Sada Reed used in-depth interviews with a number of sports journalists and made a narrative analysis of these to find the answer to the questions: How do print sportswriters use Facebook and Twitter? Do sportswriters believe it is ethical to pull and to publish direct quotes from social media? Has social media blurred lines between sportswriters' professional and personal relationships?

The immediate findings was that sports journalists have a desire for professionalism and that social media, in this case Twitter and Facebook definitely have a place in the work room and in their professional lives as a whole. Reed also found that it depends on how the relationship is between the athlete and the journalist regarding if they took information and quotes directly from social media to publish.

In Sweden there was a big study carried out by three students at the University of Gothenburg in 2011 to find how journalists use social media as a work tool. This quantitative study where 2464 journalists were asked, among other things, if they used social media, 91% said that they did. The findings also show that the three main tasks journalists use social media for is; ideation, broad research and research on different individuals (Hjort et al, 2011). They use social media in the process of gathering data, keep updated, and to get ideas on stories.

The three researchers refer to Jane Singer saying the process of publication today is more circular than linear but that the big changes and transparency of the publication process hasn't been made. The journalistic production is somewhat on its way to be moved from the closed news desks to a more open arena but this hasn't yet happened (Hjort et al, 2011).

The research also showed that many journalists use social media but few on a regular basis. Any big changes for the whole journalistic work force are therefor yet to come (Hjort et al, 2011). The quantitative study also shows that Facebook is the most used platform but it is pointed out that they didn't make a distinction between professional and private use in their

questionnaire and this makes the number meaningless in showing the most professionally used platform.

When Hjort and her colleagues asked about if it was harder to deal with information that comes from social media in a critical way, they could draw to the conclusion that the longer a journalist has used social media in their work, the easier they have to deal with the information.

The remarkable findings that the quantitative study made was that only a small part of the journalists used social media to be social. Only one in four used social media to get feedback and input from others (Hjort et al, 2011). And even fewer than that used social media to give input and to invite others in their work process.

Johan Forsstedt at Södertörn University made findings that only ten percent of journalistic tweet could be traced as dialog with the readers, this after a qualitative study on tweets made by a number of journalists and in-depth interviews with the same (Forsstedt, 2010). Carl Malmer at the University of Gothenburg took a look at the other side of the process when he made in-depth interviews with readers and followers of journalists on Twitter. He found five persons that followed journalists on Twitter and asked them questions about the possibilities of interactions with journalists, how they thought about the journalists private and personal sphere and the final journalistic product and gate keeping. Malmer found that readers felt the transparency and possibilities of interaction with journalists had increased since the breakthrough of social media. They also felt that they could now be a small part of what in the end becomes news (Malmer, 2011).

To boil down the earlier research it shows that journalists use social media to keep updated, get ideas, to make quick research and talk to each other and that the relation between the journalists and its sources is vital in how the journalist treat the information springing from social media, this all while the audience has the feeling that they can connect more easily and be a part of the news making process.

This dissertation could compliment these earlier findings giving a view on how, when and why journalists that are frequent users of social media use it in their professional work and what thoughts they might have about it, much like the pilot study from Minnesota.

Theories

Routines of news production

In Lee Becker and Tudor Vlad's conclusion in their writings about news organizations and routines (Becker & Vlad, 2009) they state that news ideation is what should be focused on for further research on the evolution of news making routines. They confirm that:

> [T]he research on news media has produced one largely consistent finding: news is extraordinarily homogeneous. The research also offers an explanation for this homogeneity: news is the product of a set of organizational routines that do not vary across time, place, or organization (Becker & Vlad, 2009).

They have worked through years of research regarding news organizations and news routines refering to many earlier studies on how newsrooms and journalists do their work and what in the end becomes news. After this overlook they conclude: "Story ideation will almost certainly remain the key process in news production. For that reason, it is where future research can be directed most profitably" (Becker & Vlad, 2009).

This research, as mentioned earlier, is formed around a modified model stemming from the framework of the journalistic work process used in David Domingo and his fellow researchers' research on participatory journalism (Domingo et al, 2008). In their study they aimed to find how the audience participates in online media in 16 different countries. To be able to do this they claimed the journalistic work process to follow this framework in falling order:

1. Access and observation

2. Selection/Filtering

3. Processing/Editing

4. Distribution

5. Interpretation

Domingo and his colleagues found a general reluctance to open up for citizen participation in any of the stages. But recognized that even shortly after this research was made they could see

differences opted for further research. I thus hoped to find this being a fact, that there are changes in participation from citizens on journalism following the development and usage of social media. The framework mentioned earlier when describing the logbook is a modification of this framework. I felt the modification to be necessary for it to be as thorough as possible.

Discussing the news process and news gathering one couldn't really get away from Gaye Tuchman's definition of the "news net" or "news blanket" from here book *Making News* (1978). In it Tuchman describes news to be gathered from a net that's getting a more narrow mesh following the number of unique sources used in the process of making news, effectively becoming more like a blanket (Tuchman, 1978). This net gets big holes in it when the different news media copy themselves and their competitors, making the news flow homogenous. The journalists go to the same places to find news, missing everything else that's not covered by the net. I believe that social media could be used to, maybe not make a blanket of the net, but at least making it have a more narrow mesh and in the long run also make news more heterogeneous when able to connect to individual citizens, groups or other organizations and the fact that they have the opportunity to do the same as long as you, as a journalist, make yourself reachable.

Henry Jenkins – Convergence Culture

Henry Jenkins is the Provost's professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts and Education at the University of Southern California. He has among other things written the book called *Convergence Culture* (Jenkins, 2006) about the merge between old and new media and the effects of participatory culture.

Jenkins talks of a converged culture, a new (2006) culture where messages is carried out through an array of platforms setting new demands on both consumers and producers. Jenkins expresses it like this:

> By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. […] convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content. (Jenkins, 2006)

This sets to explain the new consumer or audience in the convergence culture. What I would like to take focus on from Jenkins is the idea of the participatory culture. This is a direct product of the converged culture as the means of communications between everyone who wants to take part in the world conversation has dramatically increased since, at first internet, and now more specific, the different social media platforms, has taken to be a vital part of our democratic society. The journalist could be viewed as both a consumer and a producer that works out of the premises of this converged culture. Everyone can contribute and boarders between different groups of people have faded in to white. Jenkins writes:

> The term, participatory culture, contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship. Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understand. (Jenkins, 2006)

This set of rules, or at least a presentation of how a group of professionals use the new converged and social media to interact with their audience, is what this research is hoping to present. Henry Jenkins has a more direct passage where he presents this new consumer/producer relationship. It reads:

> Media producers will only find their way through their current problems by renegotiating their relationship with their consumers. Audiences, empowered by these new technologies, occupying a space at the intersection between old and new media, are demanding the right to participate within the culture. Producers who fail to make their peace with this new participatory culture will face declining goodwill and diminished revenues. The resulting struggles and compromises will define the public culture of the future. (Jenkins, 2006)

Todays journalists are in effect set in between these two power relations that Jenkins presents. On the one hand they have the power to dig deeper into private and public individuals lives and makings and in effect steer them to for example consume their product. On the other hand they have the demand from the user that he or she should be heard or that his or her problems should set the agenda. If the journalist, or producer of media of any other kind, fails to deliver, the user herself could go her own way and simply turn her back on the producer. But this is also how a journalist could use the participatory culture for its advantage. The willingness and

demand from the consumers to be a part of the democratic society as a voice gives enormous amount of data for the journalist to sort through. She could now quick and easy take up a dialog with her audience, ask them questions and answer others. Branding herself to get more readers or eavesdrop on conversations between persons of interest.

Henry Jenkins focus in his book *Convergence Culture* is for the most part on how audiences "can reshape, and recontextualize mass-media content." (Jenkins, 2006:257) The focus for this research is slightly different and is concentrated on how journalist as producers and consumers can use the converged media and what they can do to flourish in their work.

Henry Jenkins on Twitter

Before going on to describe Henry Jenkins definitions on Twitter I must point out that the findings in interviews, and analysis of logs from the responding journalists, has showed Twitter to be the most used platform of social media in the active work process, contradicting the earlier research by Hjort and her colleagues in 2011 (Hjort et al, 2011). This doesn't mean that my eyes are, or has been, closed for any other kind of social media use.

Writing about Twitter on his blog, Jenkins has tried to define this social medium and its message as: "Here It Is" and "Here I Am", these are in his mind the two main ideas on how the medium is used and what its possibilities are. He writes:

> My first impressions were correct that Twitter is no substitute for Blogs or Live Journal. And in so far as people are using it to take on functions once played on blogs, there is a serious loss to digital culture. Someone recently asked me, "If McLuhan is right and the medium is the message, what is the message of Twitter?" My response: "Here It Is and Here I Am." (Jenkins blog, 2012)

Jenkins define the "Here It Is" term as Twitters possibilities to quickly announce that there are interesting things to read or see somewhere else than in the actual tweet. In short the possibilities of linking. As a journalist I can screen the flow from different tweeters of interest to find valid information on the subject I'm interested in. Twitter also comes with the technic of hash-tagging. A hashtag, printed as a #, is a form of label that allows the tweeter to label his tweet and thus be part of a bigger conversation about the subject. For example during the

uprising in Egypt in 2011 the hashtag #Egypt and #jan25 became two umbrella labels to concentrate an mobilize people to the campaign. (Woollacott, 2011)

The "Here I Am" term that Jenkins states is defined as a mean of advertising, he writes:

> Even among the intellectuals and thought leaders whose Twitter flows I chose to follow, there is an awful lot of relatively trivial and personal chatter intended to strengthen our social and emotional ties to other members of our community. […] But even in my grumpier moments I find that I gain some loose emotional or social value out of feeling more connected to others in my circle. I feel closer to people I didn't know very well before through following their tweets. The fact that I hear from them every day means they remain more active in my thoughts. And when we connect again, we can dig deeper in our exchanges, at least in so far as the feelings are mutual, moving past the small talk into other topics.

> Here we come closest to McLuhan's core idea -- "Here it is" is a function of Twitter; "Here I Am" may be its core "message" in so far as McLuhan saw the message as something that might not be articulated on any kind of conscious level but emerges from the ways that the medium impacts our experience of time and space (Jenkins blog, 2009)

Jenkins refers to Marshall McLuhan's popular quote that "the medium is the message" from his book *Understanding media: the extensions of man.* (McLuhan, 2001) With medium McLuhan means everything we use to make things we in ourselves cannot do without an extension and the message is what effects these mediums have on us. Mark Federman, PhD in education at the University of Toronto, defined an explanation in an essay about Marshall McLuhan that I find most helpful in quickly understanding McLuhan's theories, it reads:

> Thus we have the meaning of "the medium is the message:" We can know the nature and characteristics of anything we conceive or create (medium) by virtue of the changes - often unnoticed and non-obvious changes - that they effect (message.) (Federman, 2004)

The "Here I Am" term and the message of the medium, is represented in say a revolution such the one in Egypt, that the people can gather and feel part of the community and do it in real-

time. In the ordinary day-to-day world a journalist can follow for example a politician, reading what is going on in his or hers life and talk to them through this new medium and at the same time build up a connection earlier almost impossible. On journalism and Twitter Jenkins writes:

> I sat in on a discussion at Annenberg last week with the program's incoming journalism students and a key theme was how reporters could deploy the platform to tap into larger currents in the society or identify unknown sources for their stories. This is spreadable media at work. […] helping them to move from communications at an impossibly large scale, to something much closer to the ground. They can start to see their consumers as individuals or at least as a community of people who have a broad range of responses to what they are producing. They can sample public response to their products. They can discover groups of users they didn't know existed. (Jenkins blog, 2009)

Although most of this might feel far away from an aha-moment, the social media is made to be *social*.

Thorsten Quandt and Jane B. Singer wrote strikingly that:

> […] tomorrow's journalists will need to integrate the voices and viewpoints of others within the network to a far greater extent than is currently the case. Journalists will never again control the flow of information in the way they once did; a media environment in which only a very few voices had an opportunity to be heard – and those only with the permission of a media gatekeeper – is gone for good. Journalists in a network must acknowledge that they will retain power only to the extent that they share it; without facilitating the broad exchange, and not merely the delivery, of information, they will find themselves becoming increasingly irrelevant to the conversation taking place around them. The real power of convergence is in relinquishing the power of controlling information and fostering the power of sharing it.

In conclusion the journalist will have to figure out a way to make themselves useful and to be good producers in a world were they are consumers to the same kind of information that everyone else. Although this isn't a new problem the sheer speed and possibilities made for

other groups to do the journalistic work themselves has made it more pressing now than it has ever been before.

Presentation

In the following passage I will present the responding journalists. Their logs and interviews will be presented in some mean and reflected upon. These presentations will form a ledge for my final discussion and conclusions.

Respondent number one: Anders Thoresson

Anders Thoresson is a 37 year old freelance journalist who started working as a journalist in the year 2000. In some way or another he has always covered tech news. The first five years as a reporter and editorial staff secretary at the magazine *Ny Teknik.* In 2006 he started doing freelance work and today he's writing for *Ny Teknik, Dagens Nyheter* and *Forskning och Framsteg* on a regular basis with his office at his house in the town of Vänersborg in the southern part of Sweden.

The log

Anders log shows that he uses both Facebook and Twitter but with Twitter being the more common tool for day-to-day business. He uses the different platforms to gather information as well as for asking questions and marketing his produced material, all in line with earlier research and theory.

Anders logging reaches for a week between Monday the 19th of March and Friday the 23rd of March 2012. When reading the log I get a feel that this is a person that uses the net and social media regularly. He works with his Twitter-client open almost constantly, where he has filtered his flow from "all" to "favorites" depending on how big the flow of tweets he would like to have. He follows RSS subscriptions from interesting websites that during the time of the log also becomes news in one of his articles. He talks with his audience through his blog and his Twitter account as well as following their links to other sites and tries out new tools to make this flow of information more efficient. Even on the day earmarked for writing he can't stay offline and posts a question aimed at his twitter followers. When the questions are asked, the research is made and the final product is finished, he uses both Facebook and Twitter to

market it. As a journalist Anders draws from the Jenkins' theory that Twitter is a "Here it is" and "Here I am" medium. He looks and finds interesting links, uses them and advertises his work through the medium. This also follows the earlier quantitative study (Hjort et al, 2011) with the difference that Anders also advertises via social media.

Anders log were quite thorough but just as everyone else's it were in need of a complimentary interview to get the thoughts behind the actions.

The interview

I asked the rather complex questions of what journalism is and what makes a journalist to all the logging respondents, just to see on what ethic grounds they stood upon. Anders answered that there is a discussion today about everyone being able to be a journalist when there are so many channels to use and get heard through. He himself has a more narrow distinction between a journalist and for example a blogging citizen.

> To me, what separates me and others that call themselves journalists, but not necessarily everyone, is that there is a journalistic approach with what we produce. We're not trying to push our own ideologies but instead try keeping some sort of objectivity when we produce. I don't think there is an absolute objective way to approach something but there is always an ambition to at least let both sides in a story talk. (Thoresson interview, 2012)

He doesn't agree that you have to have a journalistic education to call yourself a journalist. He can't see anything negative about it but he feels that there are many different ways one could learn what it means to be a journalist and all the small tricks and trades that comes with the profession. School isn't the only path. One might think that this contradicts with the previous acknowledgement that anyone can't call themselves journalists but Anders just means that:

> Journalism is a trade and you have to learn it one way or another. If this happens inside the walls of a college isn't the important thing, the important thing is that you have to learn it somehow and that you can't call yourselves a journalist just because you start writing (Thoresson interview, 2012).

Anders is talking about journalism as a trade. This follows the ideas of routines that Becker and Vlad (2009) talked about and my obvious follow up question was if this trade, these

routines, for Anders has changed since the introduction of social media in his professional life. He told me that when he started working at *Ny Teknik* in the beginning of his career the dialog between him and his readers were concentrated to maybe a few phone calls about something in an article that the readers perhaps felt was inaccurate. The first step of change came with the commentator fields on the online articles:

> This took the conversation from the private sector to public. This meant that I as a journalist could more easily be caught with a misinterpretation; the dialog became more natural. This has the effect in the long run that as a reporter you have to be more humble and realize that there always will be readers that know as much, or maybe more, than you on the subject and in the end you have to make better journalism to not being caught (Thoresson interview, 2012).

Just a situation like this occurs in Anders log. He wrote that on the way home from a trip it suddenly pinged from his Twitter account, someone had found an error in the latest blog post he made for *Dagens Nyheter* that same morning. Anders thanks the reader for the notice, via Twitter, and corrects his mistake on his blog (Anders log, 2012).

Twitter is the social medium that Anders uses the most in his work, something that reflects in his log. He tells me that he "gets a huge flow of interesting links from people I follow" (Thoresson interview, 2012).

He follows people interested in the same subjects as himself and that this flow can be a simple way of getting ideas and even straight news.

> A link can for example be about a company release of some kind and this is news for me and my readers. These quick news could then be gathered and produce a post on the blog or an article. That's the first thing; it becomes an easy way to keep my tentacles out, to be up to date with what's up in my area of journalism. The second is the opportunity to ask questions during a production of an article, if you need help with something or are unsure that you've got something wrong or not or when you search for a source to interview (Thoresson interview, 2012).

This is what I mean with journalists being able to use the audiences will to participate, just as Jenkins described them to be (Jenkins, 2006). Before, when there were no social media or

other easy means of getting in contact with the audience, Anders was more locked to find this information or sources interesting for an interview around the news desk and the help his colleagues could give him (Thoresson interview, 2012)

This also shows up in the log. He writes that he asks a question on Twitter about a special kind of fish and that he posts a question in a Facebook group on why a certain technicality works so bad on a computer he tests. He also points out how he uses special lists of tweeters to get the flow interesting and how he regularly skims through RSS-subscriptions.

When I ask if he uses twitter as a publishing medium for his work Anders tells me that he doesn't do this on a regular basis but that he isn't a stranger to it if he feels he written something his followers would appreciate. In the log I found this when Anders advertised for his blog for example. He also believes that he has more readers now than before social media, but it isn't something he would be able to confirm. Jenkins definition of Twitter as a "Here I am" medium at work (Jenkins blog, 2009).

I asked Anders if he uses a professional role on the different social media platforms or if he is the same Anders everywhere, he answered that he is:

> [N]ot the same Anders on the internet that you'll find at home. Primarily I think a lot differently on how I am on Facebook and how I am on Twitter. In the beginning I solely used Facebook for private purposes, it was a platform I used to keep in touch with my actual "physical" friends and Twitter was the professional tool. For the most part the situation is the same today but the last one, one and a half year, Facebook have made differences with for example the group functions and that you don't have to be friends with everybody you talk to, this is a step forward to make it a better professional tool (Thoresson interview, 2012).

From this there is easy to establish how Anders feels about keeping his private and professional lives separate. There's nothing that says that this is any different from how he would have thought if there weren't any social media.

One of the most interesting questions I feel is if the haste and speed that comes with internet, social media and all the pressure that comes from the importance of being first in a world with constant flow of information. Anders reflects on this:

> Much is about being first and I'm sure social media can push this further but at the same time I believe that this more was the case a couple of years ago and that today the pendulum has swung in the different direction. That the traditional media now have focus on being right and thorough instead of being first and risk being wrong and too quick (Thoresson interview, 2012).

Anders doesn't think that we, or himself as a professional, in the future will be tending to be more offline. But he believes that there will be differences in how social media is used and that these changes will make more people use the social media:

> I believe that there will be easier ways of filtering this enormous amount of information in the future and therefore I think that more will use it. […] The problems with the overwhelming amount of data are known and solutions are being worked on (Thoresson interview, 2012).

Respondent number two: Malin Nävelsö

The second respondent in this dissertation is Malin Nävelsö, a 38 year old local reporter and editor at the local news paper *Lokaltidningen* in Landskrona. Before she started working as a journalist she was a teacher for seven years. It was during her maternity leave that she felt she needed a change in her professional life so she enrolled to a journalism education at the Skurup folk college. She's been working as a journalist the last five years.

The log

Malin did a log between Sunday the 26th of February and Tuesday the 7th of March. Looking at her log Malin uses first and foremost Facebook, for both communication with different experts and politicians, which she writes: "has those kinds of mailboxes that overflow" (Nävelsö log, 2012)

This she does to quickly get an answer to a question or for booking an interview she might not have gotten through ordinary mail. She also uses Facebook during her week's logging as a source for information that could generate news worthy the newspaper (Nävelsö log, 2012).

There is quite a lot of Facebook communication during Malin's log, both initiated by her and direct messaging initiated by others. She uses Facebook as a first contact with politicians that

isn't answering their phone and to look at different groups and posts that might be interesting. But Facebook isn't the only social media she uses. On a regular basis she scans different blogs and her Twitter flow in search of newsworthy material. She also do a weekly social media check that she put together for the newspaper, she says it's her way trying to implement internet and social media use to her colleagues (Nävelsö log, 2012).

The interview

Malin, as well as Anders, got the tricky question to define journalism and she answered that she has a traditional definition. She thinks the purpose of journalism is to report and explain. She also believes that it is differences between different kinds of journalism and that anyone cannot form one definition that fits all kinds. On the question if anyone could be a journalist she answers no:

> [A] journalist has to see the world and her material in a special kind of way. Criticism of the sources is very fundamental for a journalist and also to be a sort of critical individual, not critical in a way that you always think the worst and becomes paranoid but that you always ask yourself what is in the background. "What's the explanation to this?" and "Who profits on this?" and so forth. But journalism is a trade; you should be able to extract a story from a flow of information or other data (Nävelsö interview, 2012).

We can acknowledge here that Malin as well as Anders is using the word trade (hantverk) to define journalism, something that can't be done by anyone that has a pen. This adds to put a professional aura to the profession.

I went on to ask what Malin thought of as news and she told me that for her as a local journalist she writes about everything. She doesn't have any special kind of news that is more important to her, "News is simply when there seems to be more behind the initial story" she says (Nävelsö interview, 2012).

I asked if the common interest is of any importance and she answered:

> That's a real important part. That's almost number one. It's supposed to interest as many as possible. People call and wonder why we never write about specifically their interests, the local bridge club or someone that's having problems with their social

secretary. This isn't news per se, the common interest is highly important when you
decide if you should go further with something or not (Nävelsö interview, 2012).

I have now tried to establish what Malin sees as news and how she looks at journalism. I then
asked her how she makes use of the social media; she said that for her, being a local
journalist, it's a good way of keeping in touch, making contact and to get quick information
about certain things. She can see on Facebook for example if some organization or others are
planning something that could be of interest; this also shows in her log (Nävelsö log, 2012).

Malin tells me that she checks social media more now than she did just six months ago. This,
she says, is a reaction on the increase of social media use by her readers and sources.

The best with this (social media) is that it makes the job more efficient. The ones that
has something to tell about stuff their up to, aren't maybe thinking about sending an e-
mail to me the first thing they do, but they will probably keep their Facebook group
updated and I can get the information that way. It's easier for everyone.

This small reflection could be used as a indicator that the audience, the readers and sources,
take news in their own hands, bypassing the journalist who then could use this to broaden her
"net" and make use of their interest in participating in the news making process (Tuchman,
1978) (Jenkins, 2006). In a way, if a journalist would totally rely on what happened on
Facebook or Twitter or any other social media, these media would effectively work as a
gatekeeping function. So far both Malin and Anders have urged that social media in their
professional process only works as a compliment to traditional journalistic methods.

It (social media) would most certainly be worthless if you would to solely rely on it
for input. You use many different things at the same time (Nävelsö interview, 2012).

Malin's work process has changed with the effect that she is relying more on the social media
flow to pick up bigger happenings. She doesn't peek as much on the rival news media or the
municipality website that she did earlier. This corresponds in how she uses social media
during her log and when I ask her if there is a risk that the journalists of today could become a
little bit lazy when many things are served to them through social media she argues that big
city journalists are today already lazier than the average and that the social media is just
making it worse:

> They often use social media to find an interviewee without regards to how representative that person really is. I couldn't work like that. Many of the people I talk to isn't even on Facebook but yes, the ones that are, is easier to reach. There is a risk that I as well could become lazy and rely on getting sources where they are easy to find, journalists is a pretty lazy work force to start with so yes (Nävelsö interview, 2012).

Malin says that the pressure of being first with something today has gotten to extreme levels. All kinds of news media have become more efficient alongside a decrease of money flow. There simply isn't enough time when you have to do every part of the journalistic work process yourself (Nävelsö interview, 2012)

I asked Malin if she changed what person she is on the internet as social media became a part of her life and she told me that with how it is today, everyone has a good opportunity to make an alias on the screen. People are social beings and it mirrors in the social media.

Defining social media Malin feel it is "based on dialog or a conversation" (Nävelsö interview, 2012). By using this definition she has a hard time recognizing a blog or YouTube to be this kind of medium. There isn't the purpose of direct dialog with the reader. This is true for Wikipedia as well, it is a collectively created mass of text but it doesn't have the aim of dialog.

When talking about the future of social media she reveals she is more uncertain about the survival of for example Twitter than Anders, but she believes social media will survive, maybe not just in the exact shape that it has today (Nävelsö interview, 2012).

To conclude, the social media has made an impact even on the local branches of journalism. Although the will to use it is strong with Malin, the abilities are fewer because of the audiences, readers and sources, lack of social media activity.

Respondent number three: Christoffer Wendick

Another local reporter, but with a totally different playground, is the next respondent, Christoffer Wendick, from Swedish public service television (SVT). He is a local reporter in Stockholm at the news program ABC. Christoffer is 36 years old and has worked as a journalist since 1997, beginning as a freelance rock journalist at different newspapers in the

southern part of Sweden he moved over to television and SVT in the year 2000. He has had a permanent employment at SVT since 2002.

Christoffer is new to professional use of social media and has effectively only used it the last couple of months. Speaking of social media, Christoffer first of all thinks of Twitter and Facebook as platforms but is aware that there are others out there. He has been on Facebook for a longer period but that is a platform he only uses on a private basis. This is something that gets clear in his log.

The log

Christoffer's log is rather Spartan. It has short notes during one week and without the interview I wouldn't have gotten much info to build on. The tendencies that can be seen though are that he uses Twitter as both a kind of publishing channel and as a source for news, just as Jenkins thought of for the purpose of Twitter (Jenkins blog, 2009). One can also notice Christoffer reads blogs on a regular basis; this is something he points out in the interview as well. Being new to Twitter, and other social media in his work, Christoffer aims at using it more after now realizing what possibilities there are with this social media platform.

The interview

Beginning the interview I asked Christoffer as I asked the others, what is journalism to you and could anyone be a journalist? He answered that he has the belief that a journalist doesn't need a proper journalistic education but someone that has to have a certain view and a mission to do journalistic work.

> There's no such thing like a legitimate journalist like there is legitimate doctors for example. In that world everyone could be a journalist. In my world a journalist is someone that works for the general public, a person that stands independent from organizations, companies, state interests, governments and so on. A person that calls himself a journalist should have in their mind to serve the general public and the common citizen (Wendick interview, 2012).

With this view of looking at journalists we can draw to the conclusion that the term journalism takes ground at the same fundament. Objectivity and independence is the most

important factors when Christoffer describes journalism and journalists (Wendick interview, 2012).

Christoffer has used Facebook in his private life for quite some time and is in no way totally green when it comes to internet use. Twitter got introduced to him by his colleagues at the news desk in connection with the Swedish election in 2010 but he never used his account back then. It was in January this year (2012) that his web editor pushed Christoffer and the rest of the reporters at ABC that they had to use social media much more in their work and his suggestion were Twitter. Christoffer first thought Twitter would be just another way to reach out to his audience but soon realized that there was so much more to the medium.

> Twitter is the push, the first step in creating an interest. It's a fantastic tool in that way that I don't have to scan blog after blog after interesting stuff. When someone writes on his or her blog, he or she posts a link on Twitter and the whole world can reach it. When I started using Twitter I thought that what you saw was what you got, I then quickly realized that the tweets were nudges, pointers, to the real information that was produced somewhere else. Twitter works for me like a big news portal and because I'm a political reporter I first and foremost follow political threads on Twitter, hash tags and individuals. I don't have any "funny people" in the group that I follow, it's strictly professional (Wendick interview, 2012).

The web editor at ABC, Henrik Arborén, had noticed that Twitter works in the most efficient way for the journalists. Although Facebook is a bigger and better used platform in the public eye, Twitter gather people that really is interested in the news ABC posts in their and their reporters Twitter accounts. It's a good marketing platform as well as a platform for dialog, the ABC: s official Twitter account has around 3000 followers and they try keeping an active dialog with their readers.

I asked Christoffer if there is any risk that he as a journalist could end up a little bit lazy. When you have a constant dialog with your audience and the opportunities to be corrected and to quickly correct your mistakes yourself, maybe you start to rely on that and stop doing the thorough journalistic ground work? He said that:

> I wouldn't post anything on Twitter that I wouldn't be able to post on our regular website or in our broadcast. I have the same ethics in both cases. Speaking more

general though, yes I think that information sometimes spreads like wildfire on Twitter. Facts that hasn't been checked, loose rumors etcetera. I feel that it is important that there is a constant dialog in the news rooms about how social media should be used and that no one should loose their heads just to be first with something (Wendick interview, 2012).

When talking about the changed habits in Christoffer's work process he takes focus on working with protecting his sources. He is concerned with what is said on Twitter is in Twitters custody forever. He tells me that he doesn't use Twitter, or e-mail, when working with anonymous sources and that this is something that a journalist should bare in mind. There is one situation when this gets complicated:

> I have gotten news tips through Twitters one to one message function and when that happens I can feel that the responsibility isn't mine in the same way any longer. The person contacted me and he or she could have chosen to pick up the phone or write an e-mail, but it's my responsibility that to keep the conversation from the social media platforms (Wendick interview, 2012).

To sum up, Christoffer doesn't trust Twitter to meet his demands on security in their systems. Regarding the rest of his work process Christoffer think it has changed in the way that he consumes news, especially on the internet, he says that:

> Earlier I browsed around on sites that I knew could be interesting along with a couple of blogs but maybe as less as a few times a month. Today I check my Twitter flow on a regular basis several times a day to keep updated, so that has changed in my work process, we have at ABC picked up stories from Twitter to do our own news. I do this daily check on the days I work but not so much in my private time (Wendick interview, 2012).

As stated earlier Christoffer is keen on keeping his private life separate from his professional, Facebook is free from professional contacts like political staff and other sources. At the same time he says that there is no way of thinking of Facebook as a private area. Everything that you wright anywhere could be found and used in ways that wasn't intended. If he wrights anything, as a private person, that is directly inappropriate on Facebook, it could come back to haunt him at a later stage.

When talking about the future, Christoffer thinks that it's always harder to take steps backwards instead of forward, to:

> Take away something that made any kind of difference in your life is hard. For example something that makes your work process easier. On the other hand I believe that there is people, me included, that feel they've got an overdose of these social media. When Facebook was new you used it all the time, sharing stuff and doing other things intended with Facebook. Today I think these time consuming activities like playing games and poke around with other different applications will disappear. Facebook will be more pure and functional for the public conversation instead of just stealing time (Wendick interview, 2012).

I propose that Twitter is a kind of purer form of Facebook and Christoffer agrees but argues that both Twitter and Facebook serve a need. Twitter is more of quicker linking and shout outs whilst Facebook is more pictures and bigger all in all.

He finishes with stressing that he isn't the best candidate to make a proper prophecy over the future of social media but states that he believes that we all are still in an experimental period, no one really knows the best ways of using these platforms. This is something he shares with the two earlier respondents.

Respondent number four: Parisa Khakuei

The last respondent to make a log and following interview was 25 year old Parisa Khakuei. She's a radio journalist working with SR and the project of a web-based 24/7 news channel called *Alltid Nyheter* (Always News). Parisa has been on *Alltid Nyheter* the last nine month, before that she worked in television at channel four and ever since her graduation she's been working with daily news in different packages and platforms. She has a candidate degree in journalism from Södertörn University.

The log

Parisa uses Twitter in her work and the log is solely based on this platform. She writes in her log that she follows a Twitter routine of checking her flow in the morning and sporadically over the day (Khakuei log, 2012). In practical Parisa uses Twitter to get up to date with what has happened during her sleeping hours and doing so she retweets what she finds interesting

and useful to get her meaning out to her audience. She only logs a few different original tweets and says that since after her recent svacation she almost feels that she hasn't had anything of her own to say, she only observes what others are talking about (Khakuei log, 2012).

As already stated Parisa follows a routine in her social media use. The week of which she is logging therefore follow a clear model and there is little that stands out. Parisa reads, takes in and retweets what she feel is necessary from a journalistic point of view.

The interview

As I did with the other respondents I started to ask what journalism is to Parisa and who has the right calling themselves journalists. Parisa believes that journalism is to take in and process facts and remodel them so that the audience can take part of it but there is a chance for anyone being a journalist today:

> Today almost anyone could be a journalist because of blogs and Twitter. You could more easily get information out today than you could before when journalists had a very high status. At the same time you might not have the tools to evaluate sources and the information you could gather, so maybe you couldn't call anyone a journalist but the term doesn't come with the same power that it did before (Khakuei interview, 2012).

Parisa doesn't really feel that you even have to have an education to be a journalist. In a perfect world she says that an education is to struggle for but that she also thinks that an education in another subject, topped with training in journalistic work methods, is almost better than a regular academic degree in journalism. If she were to be in a situation when she had to choose one between a journalist with an education and one without she would choose the sooner. Parisa draws the same parallel that my earlier respondents have done between professions that craves legitimate instrumental knowledge, such as being a doctor or a lawyer, and being a journalist. It simply isn't that kind of job. The main idea amongst the respondents is that journalism is some sort of trade but a trade you could learn from other places than school.

> I've learned more by doing the actual work than I did the three years I studied to be a
> journalist (Khakuei interview, 2012).

Parisa has used social media since 2007 when she first got her Facebook account. It took some time before she started using Twitter and she didn't really get the point at first, it just seemed as a lot of gibberish to her (Khakuei interview, 2012). It was first when she started working at *Alltid Nyheter* that she really picked it up:

> It got really important for everyone, even people that before didn't even use Facebook
> at *Alltid Nyheter* to get the channel out and to be a part of the public conversation. It is
> a good way of finding people, send out links to our channel and to get a good contact
> with listeners. It's so easy to set up a dialog with people over all and to ask questions.
> Especially if it happens something abroad and you would like to find someone to
> interview. There was a ferry catastrophe in New Zeeland for example and we could
> find a journalist on location via Twitter (Khakuei interview, 2012).

It's always hard to evaluate who's who on the internet and Parisa says that when in search of a journalist or an expert of any kind she always makes sure that they could be found elsewhere and in that way make them reliable. On the other hand when she is in search of an eyewitness it's more the feeling around the event that she's after and that it isn't as important to be certain that the man or woman behind the tweet is exactly who he or she says that they are. In general she says that she evaluates sources harder on Twitter than if she would to find them in a news paper for example.

The dilemma of being first with news is something Parisa feels has changed the way the majority looks at sources. It doesn't matter as much as it may have done earlier if you are a little bit off with something. She tells me that *Alltid Nyheter* even works in a way with the concept of being first is more important than being right. There has been occasions when they've transmitted stories that's been loose rumors, just in case they would to be true:

> I think that there has been a change in how to evaluate sources and facts today; it all
> goes much faster. It has happened to us at *Alltid Nyheter,* especially because were
> supposed to be first. We've broadcasted stuff to check it on a later stage and then be
> able to say that it wasn't really what we thought at the beginning, like "bomb threat in

> Malmö" when it actually was someone that had forgotten his phone or something, you
> just can't afford to wait.

This is from Parisa's point of view concentrated to her special kind of channel, sending non stop news during all hours of the day. At a more traditional news desk this isn't happening, although the pressure of being first is on them as well it hasn't yet gotten to these extremes.

I asked Parisa too describe what differences there are now in her typical day as a journalist than before social media and she answered in the way that could be found in her log. When going to work nowadays she could just make a quick scan of her twitter flow to get an update on the news. She has carefully selected who she follows and the variation between them gets her all aspects of the news world that she feels she needs. Before, to get the same amount of information, she needed to hop around different news sites on the web and offline. A time consuming process that's gone now. At the same time she raises the concern that it's easy to get confortable and to be satisfied that Twitter provides everything you need to know when that sometimes really isn't the case.

Being professional on Twitter and social media at large is something that Parisa feels is difficult. That was also something that was a factor in her not being on Twitter; how are you supposed to present yourself and react? She says that she is something of a mixture between professional and private. She can as easily tweet something about a rock band as she could promote *Alltid Nyheter*. She understands that she could be creating her own brand but that is nothing she actively thinks about. Jenkins "Here I am" term fits her but on an unconscious level (Jenkins blog, 2009).

Just as the other respondents she feels that a social media should be social and therefore platforms like Wikipedia couldn't be called a social medium. Parisa sees brightly on the future and believes that more people will start to use social media and that they who are already using them are to be getting better at it. This is also shared with the other respondents.

Nyhetslabbet SVT – 2012-03-29

As a complimentary part of my research regarding journalistic working methods, and the use of social media in the workroom and amongst web active journalists, I went to spend a day at SVT (Swedish public service television) with the news desk calling themselves *Nyhetslabbet*

(The News Lab). *Nyhetslabbet* is more or less a unique news desk with the soul aim of using social media in any way possible to get an interaction with their audience. While other, more traditional, news desks slowly moves towards a more active presence in social media and the web in all, *Nyhetslabbet* couldn't exist without it.

What is *Nyhetslabbet* and what do they do?

Nyhetslabbet is actually a blog situated under the bigger umbrella of SVT: s web department. They are making news that either broadens the original news casts, making a contribution with say a different choice of voices in a given subject, or news that steps away from the ordinary news stream and focuses on a subject less heard about elsewhere. The way they publish differ between ordinary postings on the blog and webcasts every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, filmed with a small mobile, software based two camera studio, broadcasted online at SVT.se and via the app SVT Play. They are supposed to be as mobile as possible and able to set up office quick in case they are needed between the earlier mentioned set times. This works in theory but the demand of 4G internet access to broadcast from the field, actually limits their abilities to go anywhere they want.

As I spent my day with the reporters there was a lot of talk about somewhat of an identity crises. The reporters see themselves as a team under the flag *Nyhetslabbet* whilst the head of the news department see them as more like a blog under the regular SVT Nyheter (SVT News) website. This, I observed, brings up problems for the daily working process that could be solved if they were allowed to be a more firm segment at the network. They can today for example not have their own Facebook account with their own name, the have to share Twitter account with SVT Nyheter and they cannot build on their website as much as they could otherwise, if they were allowed to be their own show. The makeshift solution on this problem is to loudly sneak around, using their private Twitter accounts, Bambuser broadcasting and puff as much as possible for their blog on the rest of the SVT website. I will come back to this further on.

The daily routine

The editorial staff is made up of four multi-reporters with two on a rolling schedule of fifty percent each. They do everything from idea to finished product and marketing. Everyone is supposed to be able to do everything but they have their specialties and daily tasks.

Filip Struwe is the project leader and host but points out that the organization is flat. Freja Salö is the web editor and have main responsibilities in the technical area of broadcasting, web publishing and the chat board. Niklas Svensson is the researcher and in charge of camera work and live editing during the webcasts. Leo Wallentin, who wasn't there on this day, shares employment with Niklas and effectively also his duties.

The day starts with a morning meeting, today webcasted via the service Bambuser.com. Struwe recognizes that this doesn't happen every morning and that my presence is a factor for the abnormality, it is important to make a record of this for the sake of reliability of the research. In the meeting, yesterday's webcast is evaluated and the upcoming planned webcast for the afternoon is discussed and run through. The upcoming webcast is planned to be a debate between two parts with different ideas on a cancelled concert featuring a Jamaican artist, Sizzla, with a skew view of homosexuals.

After the morning meeting there are some things to be done. A quick scan of Twitter to see the buzz on Sizzla, something that's done on every subject. Following that, Filip is answering tweets regarding the meeting and they establish that the number of viewers on Bambuser this morning was five.

Filip tells me *Nyhetslabbet* has an ongoing dialog with viewers or readers via the staff's different Twitter accounts, responses on webcasts or comments on blogs or Bambuser meetings. He also tells me that they do regular crowdsourcing on every subject through Twitter. We talk about the target audience and establish them to be "web users of all ages", he says.

This is something that seems to be the main goal by going social. Like the name suggests the medium is supposed to be a social one and the dialog between news makers and readers is prominent. How much of this dialog that really comes out as constructive changes in how the show in the end is produced, is hard to say. As stated earlier the number of five Bambuser viewers isn't exactly staggering and from an objective point of view the whole process seems a bit more like an experiment than an actual working method of making dialog. There is in my mind nothing much to say about the target audience. It is natural for them in this case to be web active, something a more ordinary journalist has to bare in mind their audience may not be.

The day goes on and as an extra bonus for me as a researcher, the news that the Swedish minister of defense is resigning reaches the news desk at *Nyhetslabbet.* This immediately stirs up a discussion amongst the journalists and I might add that although the news desk of *Nyhetslabbet* is situated literally no more than a couple of meters from one of the biggest news desks in Sweden, *Ekot,* Filip and the others get the news via Twitter. Filip, as project manager, is eager to make an extra webcast regarding these latest events. In his vision *Nyhetslabbet* could contribute with extra analyses that ordinary media may miss. And they could be one of the first to get a well grounded comment on the events by an expert on the subject. There is even talk of scratching the planned web cast and go with this new story instead. The rest of the news desk isn´t as eager as him but in the end they unanimously agrees on making an extra webcast at one o´clock with hopefully two commentary voices from each political view and one from a more objective stand point.

This is where Twitter and the blog comes in to play ones more. Twitter to make dialog and research and the blog and SVT.se to advertise. Although they all use the phone as the first tool to contact somebody I notice Twitter to be a used compliment. Filip for example tried to get the attention from the vice president at Timbro, a political think tank, via Twitter.

The work with the planned web cast goes on parallel to the new story and continuously through out the day there are new posts on the blog and on Twitter. Freja Salö also makes posts on different Facebook groups to advertise their upcoming Sizzla webcast. They discuss what hash tag to use during the Sizzla webcast and a recurring activity that occurs during the work process is that Filip makes a tweet about something relevant and the rest of the staff follows and re-tweets him. A way of reaching out to as many eyes as possible in the shortest amount of time. The four has around 3200 followers between them.

The day goes on

The webcast at one is now done. It landed with an analysis from a political commentator at about twenty minutes. One of the perks with webcasts is that you never have to compete with other broadcasts. The time slots are unlimited and if you need to you could easily open up a new channel. Another thing is that you could easily moderate a chat field before, during and after a webcast. This is something that Freja Salö and Niklas Svensson worked with during

both of the days events. Distasteful remarks were removed and they worked on keeping the discussion as grounded as possible.

Just before and after a webcast is when the activity is at its peak. Before the webcast tweets are tweeted with links to the webcast and the website is updated, putting *Nyhetslabbet* at the top for maximum exposure. After it's all over they publish reflections on their blog and tweets to make them who missed the webcast go to the website to see it or others to see it again.

Sum up

The webcast with the debate about Sizzla went fine and became a bit longer than earlier expected, but as I said before that isn't a problem when producing for the web. To sum up my impressions after being amongst a news desk that purely is aimed for the web is that everything that could be done before is being done today, but maybe with a bit more ease. The speed of the work process is as quick as the traditional broadcasts but to a much lesser cost. One of the few differences is the ability to have an ongoing dialog with the actual viewers, something that hasn't been done in an efficient way before. The amount of work to set up the webcast versus setting up an outside broadcasting van is also radically more easily and the fact that the equipment costs a fraction of what a normal TV-broadcast equipment costs.

The "new" medium, in this case being internet and specifically the social media on the internet, is used to what it initially was supposed to be used for, quick communication between sender and receiver.

Interview – Filip Struwe

Filip Struwe is as stated above the project leader for *Nyhetslabbet.* He started his career at SR in 1993 and has been in radio and television since with an array of responsibilities such as reporter, Washington correspondent, producer and anchor. I asked him some questions as a compliment to my observational study at the news desk.

I started with the question of what a social medium is for Filip and how it can be used in his works process. The observation here was that he, and his colleagues, uses social media to communicate with their viewers in both directions of asking questions as well as researching subjects through links. Filip's answer followed this observation and he answered that he uses social media as a:

Interactive interface between me and the viewer. An opportunity to a direct communiqué with new acquaintances and expert knowledge. A steady expansion of areas of knowledge and social interactions (Struwe questionnaire, 2012).

Filip's work process has changed in the way that the social media quickly has become an integrated part of his work flow, both in the first stages of production to final product. *Nyhetslabbet* main concept is based on social media so his work today couldn't exist without it.

Filip looks at social media, not surprisingly, in a positive manner. He hasn't seen any real negative aspects of these mediums other than that the representation on Twitter, by others than young and web active journalists, is rather scares and in need of an expansion. The future for Filip is web based. Although social media and the web are going to continue being a complimentary medium for broadcasting in the near future, he believes they will take over more and more. He writes that: "The campfires will last, but in the medium of the internet." (Struwe questionnaire, 2012)

Concluding discussion

Work process and routines

One of this dissertations purpose was to show the routines regarding the work and use of social media of a selected group of journalists. I took a theoretical benchmark in Domingo's model of the journalistic work process and aimed to find in which, if in any, the routines had changed after the introduction of social media in the respondents professional lives. Although used merely to build a framework for discussion the model is worth going through once more. The modified model that I made in the "Theories" chapter from Domingo, regarding the different steps in the journalistic work process, looked like this:

1. Ideation

2. First research

3. Limitation

4. Second research

5. Selection

6. Production

7. Publication

8. Marketing

I've found with my research that especially Twitter has made an impact on how the respondents work with ideation and research on the one hand and dialog, publication and marketing on the other. As showed in the theory chapter these parts is scattered through out the works process and although the most direct change has been in the way the respondents keep updated, is getting ideas and doing research, they also advertise themselves and their employer differently today and the changes after the introduction of social media could be found in every step other than perhaps the *limitation* and somewhat the *production* steps. These are two actions that still take place in the privacy of the journalists' thoughts and without the need for a public dialog and contribution.

Ideation, research and selection

Twitter has become a tool that works quick and efficient. It's mobile, easy to keep up to date and limited to 140 signs. The fact that you don't have to be in a private relationship with whom you communicate, in the way that it is with Facebook, is also something that makes it easy for the responding journalists to use Twitter.

The respondents felt that they quickly could get a grip of the current news updates just by browsing their Twitter flow and the same flow could give them ideas in creating their own journalistic product. Twitter works for many as a tool for reporting that something is interesting somewhere else via linking (Jenkins blog, 2009), and this is something that the respondents really make use of.

The social act of communicating, talking to someone, via social media was one of the other aspects the respondents felt positive about. The ability to ask questions and to keep a dialog not only benefits the audience chance to have a public voice but also journalists' ability to listen to their audience and make a personal connection that earlier has been impossible. With this also comes the opportunity to find sources and interesting subjects for interviews just by

making a tweet or a shout out in a Facebook group. This research has to be extended to find if a journalist gets more readers by having an active social media life but this is a possible and not far fetched side effect with having an active dialog with the audience.

Regarding the Tuchman "news net" (1978) the respondents have many more possibilities to find sources and voices of expertise when many are gathered on the different social media platforms. These are possibilities and not something that automatically becomes a truth. The respondents recognize the problem that journalists of today are in risk of becoming lazy and start to rely on the social media flow and what is there do dig up instead of doing proper thorough research, just as Tuchman describes it with news agencies (Tuchman, 1978). Social media platforms are, among the respondents, used as just a tool among others, a factor that heaves this problem. They are all conscious of how to use information straight from Twitter and they are more likely to be harder on those sources or the information that stems from social media.

Speed

To somewhat conclude what practical routines have changed for the respondents I can point out the factor of speed. Today the respondents could easily get up to date by reading tweets from the news papers, agencies and other journalists that they before hade to find on their (the news papers etc.) respective webpages or other channels. The social media works as a portal, gathering scattered information from an infinite amount of places. The path to find hot news and tendencies has become much shorter for the respondents and the path from the audience to the journalists as well. Facebook has the same gathering effect and both of them are good portals for a first visit in the early hours of the work day.

Another thing to point at is that the telephone has somewhat become second hand in the process of contacting people. The respondents have expressed that it is in many cases both quicker and easier to get hold of for example a politician via Twitter or Facebook than by e-mail or phone calls. In this world of constant dialog through an array of channels, people seem to use the simplest way and today that is social media, at least for some groups or individuals for example politicians in the case of Malin Nävelsö.

Production, publication and marketing

The research conclude that the respondents feel that they are in closer contact with their audience now than earlier and social media has helped to make this possible, at least in the bigger cities and broader work places such as SVT. Malin Nävelsö still struggle with this because of the lack of social media use by her audience (Nävelsö interview, 2012). This fact does come with the dilemma of private and professional personas. There seems to be a consensus that the person you are online has to reflect the values you have as a journalist, otherwise it might come back to haunt you. Looking at Malin Nävelsö there is easy to connect her feelings on how and what to think about when interacting with politicians with Reeds research on the interactions between athletes and journalists in Minnesota (Reed, 2011). The respondents has different ways of dealing with this but one conclusion that can be drawn is that Facebook, in a larger extent than Twitter, is used as a solely private medium while Twitter is where the more professional persona reigns. The publication and marketing of both themselves and their work becomes different when working in social media for the respondents. This is when they have to think of both who they present themselves to be and the constant dialog between them and their readers.

The social media has also given the respondents a new platform to publish their work. Although the actual journalistic product still is in their regular medium the ability to link to it via Twitter for example have opened up the possibilities to reach out and get a bigger audience.

The future

All of the respondents have more or less a bright sight on the future of social media. The hegemonic thought is that although the platforms of social media, Twitter for example, will not function in the exact same way that it is today, it is to late for them to disappear completely. The respondents seem to believe that people will learn to use social media more efficiently and that the platforms will purify the parts that work the best to fit their users need.

The view on journalism and journalists

Another finding my research has made is that all of the respondents looks at journalism as a *trade* that comes with responsibilities. A college education isn't the most important part in

becoming a journalist but there is a special way of thinking and dealing with information and sources that has to be learned somehow to be able to call yourself a journalist. This of course reflects on how the journalists portray themselves on the internet and how the dialog is constructed between them and their readers, in what tone and manner they speak. If the respondents looked at themselves with nothing more of a mission or ethical background than the average internet user, the dialog would look a bit different.

The earlier research

To connect this with the earlier research I can draw to the conclusion that these findings corresponds with the study done at JMG (Hjort et al, 2011) on the part that journalists use social media to keep updated and to gather and research information and that journalists that are frequent users of social media, such as the respondents, doesn't have a hard time dealing with information from social media with a critical eye. On the other hand my research tells a different story regarding the social part of social media. All the respondents urge the importance social media has for interaction and dialog with the audience, this also shows in the logs. In effect this open dialog that is sought after by the respondents also throws the conclusion Hjort and her colleagues made about the work process not becoming more transparent (2011). One should point out though that this study has a pretty narrow selection of respondents that are all carefully selected to fit the research questions.

This research also collides with the research of Johan Forsstedt (2010) that showed almost no interaction between audience and journalists on Twitter. This is a more remarkable finding against earlier research than the difference with the broader study made by Hjort et al. Forsstedt did a selection more like the one in this research. He had to find web- and of social media active journalists to find any answers at all, just like this study had to. The fact then, that this study shows, is that in some way the same types of journalists use social media differently in two different studies and that is interesting.

It couldn't be stressed more but of course the purposive selection of respondents of this study has a part in these differences but it still shows that frequent professional users of social media is thinking differently, and perhaps more sound, about how to react and treat the audience through these new mediums and how to integrate them better in their whole work process.

Jenkins participatory culture

The research has showed that the converged culture that Jenkins talks about becomes real in social media active journalists use of the medium. Journalists that try to make the most of Twitter and Facebook have had to rethink how to treat their audience. How to keep a constructive dialog with them, how to evaluate the conversations between the members of the audience, how to trust what is said is actually true and who two listen to a little bit more carefully.

Both journalists and audience use social media to reshape and recontextualize media content. The dialog between journalist and audience gives the audience the opportunity to participate and this also puts pressure on the journalist to do her work thorough when the possibilities to connect increases. The journalist has to rethink the way of how he or she is to use the never ending information flow and how to make the best of the new possibilities to interact with their audience. A mistake made by the journalist is today more likely to be noticed and corrected if the social media is used to keep a dialog. This puts the pressure on the journalist to be correct and not to be hasty with information and sources. Effectively, at least in a perfect world, increasing the standard of the journalistic product.

What Jenkins wrote about Twitter in his blog (2009) is for the respondents strikingly true. They use Twitter just as Jenkins believed the medium to be used. In the presentation of Anders Thoresson I wrote how he as a journalist used his audiences will to participate when he asked questions via Twitter and also that he found the platform a good spot to link to his produced material. He uses Twitter both as a publishing channel and as a source for news, just as Jenkins thought. Christoffer and his web editor also used and looked at Twitter this way and they both thought of Twitter as a more efficient platform than Facebook to keep an active dialog and open channel to the audience.

All of this; the dialog between audience and journalist, the linking, the Facebook groups and so on, all depends on the willingness from both journalists and audience to participate in the ongoing global conversation. This conversation has been taking place on higher levels before, out of reach for the common man, situated in debates on TV or at the radio or in news papers, almost impossible to be an active part of. Today it's been brought down to sea level, inviting anyone to at least have a shot in speaking their mind and actually be heard. A win win

situation for both professional journalists who are willing to take the social media step and their audience willing to go online and be a part of the conversation, as this research has showed.

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Interviews

Khakuei, Parisa – Interview made at SR on the 11th of May 2012

Nävelsö, Malin – Interview made via Skype on the 3rd of April 2012

Struwe, Filip – Questionnaire received on the 7th of May 2012

Thoresson, Anders – Interview made via Skype on the 3rd of April 2012

Wendick, Christoffer – Interview made at SVT on the 14th of April 2012

This is the log template that I sent to the respondents.

Loggbok.

Min tanke är att du ska föra logg (dagbok) över din användning av sociala medier under arbetet med ett eller flera journalistiska uppdrag. För att detta ska få en vetenskaplig grund vill jag att du gör det under minst en veckas tid och så noggrant du kan under arbetet med en eller flera artiklar. Jag vill ha en rättvis bild av ditt vardagliga arbete men samtidigt få en djupare förståelse för hur du använder dig av ett socialt medium när du väl använder det. Skulle det alltså visa sig att du under "min" vecka använder dig mycket mer, eller mycket mindre, av sociala medier så notera detta.

Jag vill mena att man, om man går in på detalj, kan dela upp sitt arbete som journalist i följande punkter:

- Idéstadie
- Grundresearch
- Avgränsning
- Research
- Värdering/Urval
- Produktion
- Publicering

Utefter detta vill jag att du skriver: om, på vilket sätt och varför du valde att på något sätt använda dig av ett socialt medium. Punkterna är mer en mall du kan använda, jobbar du på andra sätt så skriv och notera det, huvudsaken är att din användning ska spåras inom flera steg i processen. Jag är ute efter alla tankar, så utförligt din tid erbjuder. Detta är en kvalitativ mikrostudie där du är objektet för analys och dina enskilda tankar väger guld.

Sociala medier

Med sociala medier avgränsar jag mig till:

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, Google+, Youtube och Bloggar.

I korthet ett medium där det kan ske en social kommunikation med andra användare. Kommer du på ett annat medium utöver mina statuerade så motivera och skriv med.

Intervju

Efter du skrivit loggbok så gör du den till ett PDF samt ett word dokument och mailar den till: jonas.appelberg@gmail.com och skriv "Loggbok – Sociala medier" i ämnesrutan. När jag fått den hör jag av mig så vi kan bestämma en tid då jag kan ringa för att ställa lite frågor kring loggen.

Interview template

- What is journalism to you?
- Who could be a journalist?
- Do you have to have an education to work as a journalist?
- Since when have you used social media?
  - In your work?
- How do you feel your work has changed since internet, and first and foremost social media, became a part of your work process?
- What are the pros and cons with social media?
- In what way do you use social media in your work process?
- Do you feel that your brand is strengthened through social media?
- How would you define a social media?
- Is there any risk that you as a journalist could become lazy and rely on quick information although it might not be true, because of the ease of correcting yourselves or just get away with it in an everlasting flow of information?
- What are your thoughts about the future?

This worked as a template for doing the interviews. The questions weren't strictly followed; some may have got dropped while others may have emerged. Transcripts are made from the recordings of the actual interviews.