

**'Tweet or Be Sacked': Twitter and the New Elements of Journalistic Practice**

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**Abstract**

Twitter has gained notoriety in the field of journalism due in part to its ubiquity and powerful interactional affordances. Through a combination of digital ethnography and content analysis, this article analyzes journalistic practice and meta-discourse on Twitter. Whereas most applications of Bourdieu's field theory focus on macro-level dynamics, this study addresses the micro- and mezzo-level elements of journalism, including practices, capital, habitus and doxa. Findings suggest that each of these elements is undergoing notable change as the journalistic field adapts to the networked era. Furthermore, this article constructs a typology of Twitter-journalism practices and demonstrates Twitter's role in the transformation of journalistic norms, values, and means of distinction. It argues that these changes have contributed to new opportunities for capital exchange as well as to the emergence of a hybrid, networked habitus that integrates values and practices from the traditional journalistic field with those from digital and nonprofessional origins.

**Keywords**

Twitter; New Media; Journalism; Field Theory; Practice; Practices; Habitus; Capital; Norms; Values

Word Count: 7,945

## Introduction

The combined innovations in media technologies and social practices, which many consider to be part of a shift toward increasing convergence, interactivity, and participation, are affecting different spheres of action in various ways. From the political and cultural to the academic and technological fields, professional and amateur actors alike are becoming practitioners of many of today's most transformative technologies. While the implications for these developments are immense, there is one field where such transformations are most profound: American journalism.

The rise of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), along with the networked effects of social media services, has ushered in a new era of mediated relations. Although there is a growing abundance of powerful new media platforms, there is one platform where major shifts are occurring: Twitter. As a streamlined, short-form communication platform (140 characters or less) embedded within the larger context of the web, Twitter allows users to create their own personalized, interactive "awareness system" (Hermida, 2010) that can be accessed anywhere with an internet connection. Its journalistic value increases exponentially as it is embraced by other fields.

Journalistic practices are integrally tied to the technologies available to and leveraged by practicing actors. The work of journalists has changed considerably since the proliferation of digital media technologies. At the same time budgets are getting tighter, many throughout the journalistic field are expected to do "more with less" (McChesney and Nichols, 2010: 23), and work quickly to make news "direct" and "in real time" (Champagne, 2005: 53). Still, the recent proliferation of social media tools and the great extent to which they are being leveraged throughout the journalistic field provides a notable contrast to the aforementioned trend of decreasing funding and increasing expectations. Many reporters have become so taken by Twitter that they rely on it for a growing portion of their practices. To be sure, some of this push is coming from professional journalism organizations, as evidenced by BBC Global News Director Peter Horrocks's famous proclamation to his staff: "Tweet or be sacked" (Miller, 2011). Others may be swayed as the journalistic movement approaches a critical mass.

These pressures have manifested in a whole array of new(s) practices that networked journalistic actors—professional and not—perform in the process of identifying, producing, distributing, and responding to news. Beyond the growth of Twitter and other social media for journalistic practices (Lasorsa et al., 2011), these networks have also been used for the production and reproduction of journalistic norms (Lasorsa, 2012). Furthermore, the "triple revolution" of communication technologies following the proliferation of mobile, online social networks (Rainie and Wellman, 2012) has helped usher in new articulations of journalism, citizenship and democracy (Papacharissi, 2009).

Altogether, these developments have facilitated a number of important changes to the structural and practical dynamics of American journalism. However, little research has analyzed how the increased acceptance of Twitter has changed the institutional culture, power relations, and practice of professional journalism. Given the breadth and nature of this gap, Bourdieuan field theory provides an ideal lens through which to analyze such emergent shifts. A number of

recent studies have already begun to shed light on these unfolding dynamics (Russell, 2013; Papacharissi and Easton, 2013; Hellmueller et al., 2012; Krause, 2011; Vos et al., 2011; Compton and Benedetti, 2010; Wiik, 2009; Kunelius and Ruusunoksa, 2008; Schultz, 2007). Still, there are significant gaps in our understanding of how cultural and technological—in combination with political and economic—shifts can transform the practical dynamics of the journalistic field. This article seeks to help fill these gaps through an analysis of journalistic (inter)action on Twitter.

## Literature review

Field theory has become a principal lens through which many scholars make sense of the macro- and mezzo-level interactions occurring with(in) the journalistic field and other fields of power and cultural production (Benson and Neveu, 2005). *Fields* are highly relational spaces consisting of positioned agents whose interactions are textured importantly by the structure of their relations as well as the various kinds of resources (capital) that agents wield in interaction (Bourdieu, 2005; Thompson, 1991). Bourdieu differentiates between multiple types of *capital* including economic (monetary), cultural (class-based knowledge, tastes, and resources), social (the potential for opportunity based upon relations amongst actors), and symbolic (honor and prestige) (Bourdieu, 1993; Swartz, 1997). As a general rule, the more capital one possesses, the more power they may wield.

Fields undergo change based upon various internal and external dynamics. Shifts in the definition, value, and possession of differing forms of capital can lead to profound changes in a field's makeup. Furthermore, new actors can have a profound impact on a field's structural and practical elements. Nonetheless, although field theory is inherently attuned to the constant process of social construction—i.e. “structured” and “structuring” structures—the journalistic field is often talked about in a way that highlights its continuity and downplays its ongoing transformations (cf. Benson and Neveu, 2005; Russell, 2007; Krause, 2011; Kunelius and Ruusunoksa, 2008).

As Bourdieu conceives it, the *habitus* is a system of “durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures” (1990: 53). In other words, the habitus is akin to having a “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990: 66), or what Song (2010: 264) calls “the expectations, conceptions, and ideals of the community” which, of course, requires the existence of a specific field with specific stakes (Bourdieu, 1998: 81). Differing position-takings amongst all fields, but especially the field of power—and in the context of this research, the journalistic field—structure the habitus in different ways and thus provide actors with varying dispositions. Major innovations in technology are also said to give rise to hybrid habituses that incorporate new values with old ones (Papacharissi and Easton, 2013).

Bourdieu defines *doxa* as “the universe of tacit presuppositions that we accept as the natives of a certain society” (2005: 37). In other words, doxa is a field's taken-for-granted values that go largely undiscussed and undisputed (Bourdieu, 1977). In comparison to doxa,

Bourdieu offers the concepts of *heterodoxy* and *orthodoxy* to signify those values which are up for discussion and debate, as well as those that are not.<sup>1</sup> Altogether, these concepts make up much of Bourdieu's theoretical model. Thus, as actors are socialized into a field they start acquiring field-specific capital, forming a situated habitus, and eventually become accustomed to the doxa of that field. The end result of this process is *practice*.

No matter what theoretical lens one applies to the study of journalism, technological innovations frequently play a central role in processes of change (Krause, 2011; Pavlik, 2000). Thus, whether it is through a shift in structural relations with other organizations or fields, or through a shift in micro- and mezzo-level journalistic practices themselves, technology is a key factor in the radical changes occurring in the journalistic field (Pavlik, 1998; Pavlik, 2001; Deuze, 2007; Boczkowski and Ferris, 2005; Boczkowski, 2010; Lee-Wright, 2010; Papcharissi and Easton, 2013). Indeed, the journalistic field is undergoing vast changes as digital "affordances"—i.e. "the type of action[s] or...characteristic[s] of actions that a technology enables through its design"—are increasingly "leveraged," or put into action (Earl and Kimport, 2011: 10).

According to Alfred Hermida, Twitter has given journalists a new "awareness system" to keep abreast of and verify the latest news and potential sources (2010; Hermida 2012). Former National Public Radio (NPR) "social media strategist" Andy Carvin is a prime example, as his work on Twitter allowed him to cover the events of the Arab Spring live and in groundbreaking fashion (Carvin, 2012). Similarly, journalists Paul Lewis (Guardian) and Ravi Somaiya (New York Times) "made extensive use of Twitter during the [2011 UK] riots" (Vis, 2013: 43). Examples like the ones set by Carvin, Lewis and Somaiya illustrate the logic behind the journalistic field taking to Twitter with such force, given how powerful a crowd of networked individuals can be for practicing journalism across vast distances and in real-time (Hermida et al., 2014). Indeed, the journalistic potential of the medium is so compelling that studies have shown Twitter becoming "normalized" throughout the field (Lasorsa et al., 2011). As the title of this article suggests, this shift creates a climate where abstention from the Twitter community may have a negative impact on individual journalists and their institutions.

Growing bodies of literature are investigating the transformative potential of digital media on the dynamics of the journalistic field. For example, an international, comparative analysis of media system changes brought on by digital innovations yielded notable findings about the structure and products of the journalistic field and the varying role that internet technologies may play in it (Benson et al., 2012). Contrastingly, more mezzo-focused studies have developed measures of journalistic capital and doxa that suggest ongoing changes in light of web-influenced practices (Hellmueller et al., 2012). Despite the strength and importance of these studies, there is still much to learn about the transformative potential of Twitter and other new media for journalistic practice.

Overall, the analytical utility of Bourdieu's field theory is becoming increasingly apparent as research continues to shed light on the dynamics of journalistic transformation in the digital age (Siapera and Spyridou, 2012). Still, there is less consensus regarding how, why, and to what effects Twitter is being leveraged in journalistic practice. Therefore, this study observed journalistic practice and analyzed meta-discourse on Twitter to identify relevant norms,

dispositions, and capital at stake in the practice of networked journalism. As such, this article will focus on addressing this principal research question: In what ways does journalistic meta-discourse on Twitter demonstrate new logics and relations of practice in the networked era?

### *Discursive practice and 'vocabularies of motive'*

Given this study's focus on journalistic practice and meta-discourse on Twitter, it is necessary to consider the relationship between speech and action. C. Wright Mills' theory of social action is compatible with Bourdieu's in its basic sociological orientation.<sup>2</sup> But, one key difference was Mills' pointed consideration of discourse as a reflection of action, "past or present," which can convey and reinforce "systems of action" (1940: 904-905). Of course, there are also indisputable differences between speech and action. We have age-old aphorisms to remind us that "actions speak louder than words," and "talk is cheap." Yet, as Mills makes clear, speech is more than vocalized motive; it is an act in itself (cf. Gubrium and Holstein, 2008). Thus,

To speak is inevitably to situate one's self in the world, to take up a position, to engage with others in a process of production and exchange, to occupy a social space. *In its structure and use language is one of the central vehicles of habitus* (Hanks, 1993: 139) [emphasis added].

As Bourdieu repeatedly emphasizes, social action includes an exchange, most often measureable through specific forms of capital. Furthermore, "motives may be considered as typical vocabularies having ascertainable functions in delimited societal situations" (Mills 1940: 904). Stated in Bourdieu's terms, Mills' "ascertainable functions" can be seen in the exchange of *capital*, reflection of *habitus*, and delineation of *doxa* that occur within separate fields of social action. Accordingly, analysis of meta-discourse offers a revealing window into the elements of practice (Scheuer, 2003; Scollon, 2001), and can be especially revealing when combined with techniques of participant-observation (Gubrium and Holstein, 2008).

### **Methods and data**

This research utilized a mixture of qualitative methods. Comprised in part by textual analysis, this study extends Altheide's (1996; Altheide and Schneider, 2013) ethnographic content analysis (ECA) methods to analyze texts from within the journalistic field on Twitter. Although the unit of analysis largely consists of individual tweets by actors in the journalistic field, data also exists in longer form given the commonality of linking on Twitter. Additionally, the digital ethnographic component of this research utilized online participant-observation methods (Jensen, 2009; Coleman, 2010; Kozinets, 2010) over a three-year period (2009-2012) to probe deeper into journalistic practices on Twitter. This included analysis of the *form* of the Twitter platform (i.e. its structure and affordances) as well as the *content* of discursive (inter)actions

surrounding Twitter's journalistic sub-field. Overall, the combined consideration of journalistic practices and meta-discourse—referred to as Digital Ethnographic Content Analysis (DECA)—provides a revealing window into how journalists use Twitter, as well as how they talk about that use.

Participant-observation of journalistic (inter)action on Twitter revealed a number of hashtags (i.e. tagged keywords) commonly used by journalists, and snowballing from this initial list yielded a greater number of relevant search terms.<sup>3</sup> Three hashtags were selected for analysis—"journalism," "journchat," and "wjchat"—because each represented Twitter's journalistic field in a unique manner. For example, "wjchat"—an abbreviation of "web journalist chat"—and "journchat" were selected because both hashtags were utilized in regular "tweetups," or live Twitter chats, frequented by journalists and other media professionals, whereas "journalism" was a keyword more likely to be used when non-professionals discussed the field.

Using the Archivist software, Twitter searches were conducted on a tri-weekly basis over a month's time—the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of July to the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August, 2011. Altogether, this yielded 27,045 individual tweets. Given this study's interest in meta-discourse regarding the role of Twitter in journalistic practice, a sub-set was created consisting of all tweets including the word "Twitter." This resulted in a final sample of 1,044 tweets (see Figure 1).

[INSTERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Following the procedures adapted from Altheide (1996; Altheide and Schneider, 2013), the hashtag data sampled from Twitter was systematically coded and analyzed using DiscoverText to identify emergent frames and themes. The coding procedure took the shape of what Altheide and Schneider (2013) term the "double loop of analysis," where participant-observation and initial coding of textual data allowed for greater meaning and patterns to emerge.<sup>4</sup> Thus, an examination of field notes and archived extra-textual data yielded important insights about common journalistic themes and frames represented in the hashtag discourse.

While *themes* are "recurring typical theses" that span multiple texts within a broader discourse, *frames* "focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and, above all, how it will *not* be discussed" (Altheide and Schneider, 2013: 52-3). Themes of practice emerged according to the observed patterns in journalistic (inter)action—those eight journalistic uses of Twitter shown below—and also in accordance with the *elements of practice* (see Figure 2) pertaining to Bourdieuan expressions of journalistic capital, habitus, and doxa. Furthermore, frame-based codes focused on the interests, values and field positions exhibited through speech acts on Twitter. Thus, coding for themes helped reveal trends in journalistic practice on Twitter, while frames revealed the accordant values and position-takings exhibited by actors' practice in the field. For example, the tweet "My social media discussions are largely an outlet for my work. Real reporting can be done via #Twitter. But not all of it #wjchat" was coded as fitting the news dissemination theme and heterodoxy frame due to its restrained approval of Twitter for journalism, while its expression of the actor's practices and dispositions demonstrated its added relevance to the habitus theme.

[INSTERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

## Results

The observations of journalistic interaction and analysis of meta-discourse on Twitter conducted for this study yielded a robust array of themes relating to journalistic practice. These results are broken down into two categories, beginning with individual practices and moving on to broader elements of practice.

### *Eight journalistic practices on Twitter<sup>5</sup>*

*Information collection.* The challenge of efficient information collection has long been of central importance for journalists, as well as members of the public. Twitter's logic of selectively "following" individual accounts and discursive topics allows users to customize the theme(s) of their feed based upon their fields of interest. Thus, Twitter can help journalists keep up with a wide variety of news—something the medium excels at—while loosening their reliance on mainstream media (MSM) outlets. For example, multiple #journalchat participants talked of "routinely leav[ing] hashtag searches open in their Twitter client" to cast their news net beyond the margins of their personal network. This theme clearly resonates with other research demonstrating how Twitter functions as a modern "awareness system," which helps users both collect and disseminate information (Hermida, 2010).

*News dissemination.* One of the most leveraged and visible of Twitter's journalistic affordances is the sharing of information. The medium's 140-character limit provides just enough space for a tweet to contain a grabbing quote or headline and a link to a longer-form story. The structure of the Twitter network provides an ideal system for sharing information with "followers" and other curious members of the public. For example, a #wjchat contributor emphasized Twitter's new dissemination affordances thusly: "I think breaking news is where the importance of your having established presence/personality on Twitter shines most." Direct authorship is not even required, as Twitter's "retweet" function allows users to curate and share content written by others. Furthermore, given the mobility and ubiquity of smartphones as well as Twitter's nearly seamless convergence with other photo and video services, it affords nearly all users the ability to disseminate (often breaking) news to an increasingly networked public with great efficiency.

*Sourcing.* Similar to the process of information collection, many journalists are increasingly using Twitter as a means of connecting with potential sources. In addition to the ideal-typical examples provided by the likes of Andy Carvin, winner of the 2012 Shorty Award for best journalist using social media, discussions about using Twitter and other social media tools for sourcing was a common theme amongst the hashtag discourse analyzed in this research. While

ideal-typical cases like Carvin's illustrate how new media tools allow the most tech-literate journalistic actors to find information and sources for important events across the world, the majority of journalists using Twitter simply integrate these practices into their diverse reporting repertoire. Indeed, many #wjchat participants responded to Carvin's explanation of his Twitter sourcing practices with interest and intent to begin utilizing some of his methods. Likewise, after explaining how much they learned about leveraging Twitter for sourcing purposes during a #wjchat, one participant tweeted: "Wish my sources were on twitter #smalltownblues." Another explained: "My SM reporting on breaking means using twitter as the source for Qs and tips that I verify."

*Public note-taking.* Another common theme for journalistic uses of Twitter is as an outlet for public note-taking. Similar to the practice of live-blogging events, Twitter-journalists leveraged the medium to similar ends. Thus, in addition to serving as a personal record of quotes and sources to inform longer-form stories, these tweets make this information public. Live events such as political speeches and sporting events are ideal instances where live-tweeting practices are employed by journalistic actors. However, despite the significance of this practice, there was little explicit talk of it in the Twitter chats analyzed for this project.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, a few chat participants did discuss the practical and ethical issues surrounding live-tweeting of events. And although it may pose potential conflicts for journalists affiliated with the Associated Press, BBC, or other institutions with similarly restrictive social media policies, live-tweeting is an increasingly common practice among citizens and professionals.

*Public engagement.* Today's networked journalism affords—and all but requires—much greater engagement between journalists and the public. This theme was highly visible in much of the tweets considered in this study, especially during a #wjchat discussion over which social media platform the users preferred. As one contributor explained: "If you want to engage, in terms of conversation, Twitter makes everyone accessible." Similarly, another stated: "Definitely Twitter. I have more conversations with a wider range of people on different topics. Best engagement hands down." And as yet another observed: "It says something about engagement that we chat on Twitter instead of G+, Facebook, Tumblr, etc." Moreover, Andy Carvin chimed in to emphasize that his "Twitter followers interact w/ each other." Thus, beyond the lowering of barriers to entry to the journalistic field and facilitating greater public engagement with journalists, Twitter's interactive affordances have also given rise to greater interaction across fields.

*Journalistic meta-discourse.* While many of the practices discussed above arose in the distinct production of journalistic content, others served different functions, such as the production of and participation in field meta-discourse. This often took the form of journalistic criticism or reflexivity that explored, explained, or called into question the structural and practical realities of the field. For example, much of the Twitter discourse analyzed for this research addressed various norms, ethics, and practices in networked journalism. As demonstrated below, discussions of these themes often turned into debates over whether journalistic orthodoxy



should be preserved, or if newer heterodox norms and values might better suit the new media ecology. Although these discussions were rarely central to the actors' professional practice—save for journalism scholars—they did contribute to the production of various forms of journalistic capital.

*Other professional (inter)actions.* In addition to those named above, there were countless other professional interactions that commonly took place on Twitter. Many of these practices often served social functions, such as sharing and making recommendations, chatting, asking for advice, etc. Twitter content analyzed from the #journalism hashtag revealed numerous instances of users offering and requesting practical advice on how to leverage the medium's affordances for journalistic purposes. For example, one #journalism contributor tweeted about his plan to teach others in his organization about Twitter and asked for input: "Talking to the copy desk today about how to use Twitter. Any advice for new people I should include?" Another tweeted a link to a story on "Why is Twitter a great resource for #journalism and #journalists." While professional interactions on Twitter were often less formal than other professional exchanges, due in large part to its brevity and conversational structure, this theme differs distinctly from personal (inter)actions because of its relevance to journalism. Furthermore, beyond the various manifest functions served by these (inter)actions, they also serve many latent functions, including the exchange of capital.

*Personal (inter)actions.* Countless scholars and journalists have noted the many benefits of allowing journalists to be more personal—and thus more relatable—in many public interactions, especially those occurring online. Thus, it is common for journalism professionals to leverage Twitter and other social media to occasionally show a human face. From brief details about a user's personal life, to a friendly exchange between two or more users, and even the voicing personal opinions, many journalistic actors on Twitter leveraged the medium for purposes that weren't strictly business-related.<sup>7</sup> While some users went as far creating separate accounts for personal and professional tweeting, most found some way to integrate their personal and professional selves. In general, Twitter-journalists did regularly engage in personal inter(actions), although these tweets made up a minority of most feeds.

### *Elements of practice*

*Capital.* Twitter's prominence as a medium for journalistic (inter)action means that various forms of journalistic capital flow swiftly throughout the network. Most directly, Twitter can help journalists amass *social capital* by establishing ties with other actors in the field. This was a common theme in both #journchat and #wjchat discourses, which frequently emphasized the importance of the Twitter network as a kind of modern rolodex. Indeed, many in the field saw Twitter as so pertinent to social capital that a conference panel was held on the subject (Laucius, 2011).

One central avenue to *economic capital* via Twitter is the driving of web traffic to sites monetized with advertising and/or paywalls. Additionally, sites like MuckRack—an aggregator and community of journalists on Twitter—now charge for premium services, and its growing popularity is an indication of the increasing economic value of Twitter’s journalistic discourse. This issue was discussed on both the #journalism and #journalchat hashtags, much of it prompted by a #journalchat moderator’s question about “who should own journalists online identities” in light of a case where the “BBC lost 60k Twitter followers to its competitor” (Bergman, 2011). Despite the central importance of economic issues to the journalistic field, only a small portion of the discourse analyzed for this study addressed this theme, likely because of Twitter’s continued role as an indirect source of revenue. Nonetheless, as is shown below, Twitter-journalism practices can also help build other forms of capital, which may later be converted to economic capital.

Perhaps the most visible instances of journalistic *cultural capital* exchanged on Twitter come in the form of commentary and field meta-discourse. The personal (inter)actions that take place on Twitter help to facilitate the kinds of clever, intellectual commentary that were rarely visible to audiences prior to the rise of the participatory web. There may be no greater example of Twitter’s relevance to cultural capital than the practices of Andy Carvin and other journalistic actors deeply engaged on Twitter. Not only does Carvin’s professional routine center around gaining knowledge of distant events—namely political movements in the Arab world—through Twitter, but he also uses the medium to share tips and therefore help others in the field build social media skills. Moreover, the public engagement Twitter facilitates helps journalists increase the impact of their reporting, thus assisting in the accumulation of other forms of cultural capital.

Many of journalism’s most tech-savvy thought leaders illustrate how powerful Twitter can be in helping them build *symbolic capital*. Andy Carvin is an obvious, if recurring, example of symbolic capital because he has earned a reputation as a “Twitter journalist” who leverages the medium proficiently in reporting on international news events. Additionally, many chat participants used Twitter for promotional purposes by sharing headlines and linking to stories. More broadly, many used Twitter to promote (i.e. tweet about) others’ work. Each of these practices demonstrates Twitter’s role in building and maintaining status as a journalist.

*Habitus.* Twitter’s significance to the journalistic habitus is becoming increasingly apparent throughout the field. Accordingly, much of the discourse analyzed for this study provided explicit examples of Twitter’s place within journalistic practices and dispositions. For example, a #journalchat participant explained how new media technologies like Twitter fit into his journalistic practice: “My social media discussions are largely an outlet for my work. Real reporting can be done via #Twitter. But not all of it.” The habitus exemplified in this tweet illustrates the hybridity that is now so common of the modern journalistic disposition. It is explicit about the importance of social media’s journalistic affordances, but also about the fact that the profession’s more traditional role has not disappeared. Furthermore, a #journalism contributor tweeted about “Using Twitter to Collaborate on Investigations,” which embodies the open and

participatory nature that has become a trademark of the networked era. Similar themes were also common among #journchat participants.

Because the journalistic habitus is integrally tied to actors' positions and dispositions, it is important to consider specific practices (for example, the eight discussed above) as well as the field location of Twitter-journalists. In this case, the majority of journalists contributing to the discourse analyzed for this study worked for a professional media organization and were also active in the journalistic sub-field of Twitter. As some chat participants noted, Felix Salmon, a journalist and blogging editor for Reuters, has argued that the journalistic value of Twitter was so high that he would pay \$1000 annually for the service (Macnicol, 2012). Such assertions clearly attest to Twitter's journalistic importance and indicate its influence on the hybrid positions and dispositions of networked journalists.

*Doxa.* Along with shifts in journalistic practices and dispositions come significant strains to the field's values, which are often identifiable in discursive exchanges. Accordingly, much of the Twitter discourse analyzed for this study was frequently framed around heterodox debates, like the costs and benefits of new media. These debates often concerned values of accuracy and credibility, prompted by the speeding pace of the news cycle. For example, while some users were concerned about tweets being viewed as comparable to, and sometimes even a replacement of, more traditional forms of journalistic practice, many others celebrated Twitter's journalistic potential. As one #wjchat participant tweeted, "Don't be afraid to run with a story you've found from Twitter. Twitter is here to help you, not hurt you."

Many chat participants agreed that retweeting breaking news was a useful act even if the information it contained was not yet verified. In a post that was retweeted many times, one #wjchat user declared: "Not journalistic sin to pass along rumors in new newsroom called Twitter." The framing of these accounts illustrates the extent to which journalistic doxa is in motion due to the kind of field disruption facilitated by Twitter and the participatory web. However, many Twitter-journalists recognized a notable difference between running with unconfirmed rumors through traditional media and passing them along via social media. As one user stated in regard to recent instances of Twitter inaccuracy that were a central point of debate: "Being wrong on #Twitter (lasts only seconds) #Future of #Journalism."

Despite such heterodox discourse, numerous other chat participants remained dedicated to traditional, orthodox journalistic norms such as accuracy and objectivity, and did not consider digital platforms like Twitter an exception. For example, a #wjchat participant emphasized that passing on rumors via Twitter was a "sin," stating: "You'd be pressed to publish a rumor in an article / blog post -- how's twitter different?" Similarly, another #wjchat participant tweeted: "even if I saw it on Twitter or in social media, it still needs verification. that aspect of journalism hasn't changed." Thus, orthodox values still remain strong amongst a significant portion of journalists on Twitter. Nonetheless, many chat participants framed accounts through a synthesis orthodox and heterodox values. As one #wjchat participant tweeted: "Same rules of traditional journalism apply. Twitter isn't meant to loosen those rules, just more opportunities to find truth." The diversity of this discourse illustrates how the

tension between traditional and digitally-driven journalistic values may slowly be approaching synthesis.

## Discussion

The Twitter data analyzed for this study reveal significant application of the medium's journalistic affordances as well as a keen awareness of the various ways the field is shifting due in part to the affordances of the participatory web. First and foremost, a shift in practice is underway. This study established a typology of eight *practices* employed by journalistic actors on Twitter: information collection, news dissemination, sourcing, public engagement, brief note-taking, field meta-discourse, other professional (inter)actions, and personal (inter)actions. A large portion of MSM journalists contributing to the discourse analyzed for this study appear to use Twitter primarily as a means of sharing content and staying current on news. Additionally, many of the most dedicated Twitter journalists used the medium to find sources and engage with the public, while a broader swath also leveraged Twitter as a means of journalistic criticism. Furthermore, Twitter's journalistic sub-field plays host to countless other professional as well as personal (inter)actions, further illustrating the hybridity it facilitates. As Andy Carvin candidly put it: "I don't just have Twitter followers. You're my editors, researchers & fact-checkers. You're my newsroom" (Zamora, 2012).

These examples illustrate the broad array of implications stemming from the normalization of Twitter and other digital tools within American journalism. But, key transformations are also taking place at the deeper levels of Bourdieuan practice, the most apparent of which can be found in the dispositions, or *habitus*, of the field's actors. As journalistic practices continue to evolve with the proliferation of new media tools, the ways journalistic actors view the world also begin to shift. For example, journalistic notions of interactivity and engagement tend to follow the patterns of hybridity and convergence modeled by the technologies themselves. As Riley et al. found, many newspaper reporters in the late 1990s were "horrified at the idea that readers would send them e-mail about a story they wrote and might even expect an answer" (1998; quoted in Steensen, 2011: 317). But as this study demonstrates, field-relations are shifting as a growing number of journalists adapt to the interactive world of networked journalism. Therefore, I argue that the journalistic field is undergoing significant transformation, resulting in the emergence of a hybrid *networked habitus*.

By using the term "networked habitus," I mean to highlight the growing acceptance of digital, interactive values and practices throughout much of the field (see Dahlgren, 1996; Deuze, 2007; Song, 2010). According to Filho and Praca's analysis of the changing structure of Brazil's journalistic field, "the new journalistic structures such as blogs and twitter provide the feeling of augmented 'agency' and journalistic independence. However, they are still bound by the norms and practices of the companies" (2009: 19). Thus, journalistic actors are progressively fashioning a hybrid habitus which incorporates many networked values and dispositions. And while the skills of traditional journalism remain essential (Thompson, 2010;

Herrera and Requejo, 2012: 88), they are increasingly overlapping with digital skills, many of which rely heavily upon networked values.

While this study suggests that networked technologies can play a highly significant role in structuring today's journalistic habitus, such an assertion is not entirely new. Technologies are "subsets of habitus" whose place in the field serves to inform and influence the dispositions of actors (Sterne, 2003: 370). Thus, as with many other technologies and practices, Twitter and the web are increasingly becoming a part of the journalistic habitus. This argument shares many similarities with Papacharissi and Easton's (2013) theorizing of a "habitus of the new," in that both emphasize the significance of discourse, technology, and convergence in the formation of a hybrid habitus. However, the field convergence and normalization of networked practices as seen on Twitter—those characteristics that make up the journalistic "networked habitus"—differ greatly from Papacharissi and Easton's broad notion, which suggests general trends in dispositional hybridity "via a state of permanent novelty" as facilitated by dynamics of new media (2013: 172).

Since the rise of the web and the recent crisis in the newspaper industry, journalistic *capital* exists increasingly in an online—or at least augmented—world. Given profound technological advancements, opportunities for the exchange of social, cultural, symbolic, and even economic capital continue to grow. One of the most obvious and compelling forms of capital available on Twitter is *social capital*. However, as is true of for all forms of capital, the emphasis is not simply on the connections themselves, but rather the sum of potential power and opportunity facilitated by this set of relations (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997). While connections made on Twitter may remain strongest there, the steady collapse of the digital and face-to-face (F2F) realms has meant that social capital most often transfers to other contexts (Jurgenson, 2011).

Twitter has arguably made the largest impact in the area of symbolic capital, which is amassed through (inter)actions that publicly elevate an actor's status in the field. Capital may be transferred to the form of (symbolic) power when the sum of an actor's known capital influences their (inter)actions within the field, which it does regularly. Whereas MSM journalists have been most likely to build symbolic and cultural capital by reporting on important public issues that "enhance their prestige and moral positions among audiences" (Kumar, 2009: 153; Champagne, 2005), networked technologies provide new opportunities for the exchange of capital. For example, Twitter's increasingly normative status within the field (Lasorsa et al., 2011) has helped it grow into a leading digital space where journalistic reputations are made and maintained. The sheer number of journalistic actors and audiences present on Twitter allows reporters to build a meaningful reputation—positive or not—through their (inter)actions.

Bourdieu's notion of *doxa* highlights the taken-for-granted norms and values of a particular field, which can (and often do) undergo change along with shifts in practice. Values can gain or lose acceptance through exchanges between actors taking orthodox and heterodox positions. Another important factor is the broader stability of the field, given that crises are a necessary but not sufficient condition for shifts in *doxa* to occur (Bourdieu, 1977: 169). Recent

economic and technological shifts have manifested as such a crisis, ushering in the kinds of practical transformations which have been the subject of this article.

According to the data collected for this study, one of the field's primary issues of debate on Twitter and the web concerned the values of truth and verification as well as the distinction between professional and citizen journalism. Whereas a vocal minority of Twitter-journalists sought to uphold traditional values, many more took hybrid positions that synthesized traditional and digitally-driven values. While debate continues, the fact that such contention is itself manifested through new media suggests that a transition toward doxic status may be further along than some traditionalists might hope. Indeed, "such deliberations may be had over a cultural and ideological shift that has already occurred and whose logic is finally simply playing itself out in our technological and social institutions" (Song, 2010: 270). As acceptance of these values and practices approach a critical mass, Twitter usage is steadily moving from journalistic heterodoxy to orthodoxy, and will quite likely become a doxic norm in due time.

## Conclusion

From the telegraph, to the telephone, to Twitter, the proliferation of new media technologies has had a profound impact on many fields and practices, especially those related to journalism. Drawing on digital ethnographic and textual data, this study analyzed Twitter's affordances and practical implications for the journalistic field. Although a notable portion of the field remained skeptical about the implications of Twitter and other new media tools for journalistic practice, a clear majority of Twitter-journalists found the medium to be a great asset. Reasons cited included its speed, conciseness, interactivity, and potential for engagement, made possible by its ubiquity and popularity in the field. However, the limitations of the data collected for this study—comprised of journalistic (inter)action and meta-discourse on Twitter—raise questions about the extent to which the conclusions fit the field as a whole.

Nonetheless, as Twitter-journalism practices spread across the field, the capital and dispositions of the field's actors begin to reflect this normalization, thus affecting how they practice and perceive journalism. Accordingly, this article has argued that the field is currently witnessing a notable shift in the habitus of many networked journalists; as traditional and digital practices converge, journalists are becoming normalized to this hybrid relationship. The result is a combination of dispositions integrating many of the norms and values typical of the participatory web. This development is interpreted as the emergence of networked habitus, where journalistic actors are increasingly disposed toward technological and participatory practices from hybridized field positions.

As journalistic capital and habitus undergo change, so goes journalism's norms and values (i.e. doxa). This was illustrated by the taken-for-granted values inherent within statements of many Twitter-journalists. By analyzing journalistic meta-discourse on Twitter, many of the field's orthodox (accepted) and heterodox (debated) values were shown to be consistent with networked values of openness, participation, and convergence. Altogether, because the field's elements of practice come to constitute the field itself, the ongoing

transformations documented here are highly significant for American journalism and those seeking to understand it.

This study begs numerous questions about the stability and transformation of American journalism's core elements of practice, many of which can be examined more closely and comparatively. This could be accomplished through an amalgamation of digital and F2F approaches to the study of the ways new media are implicated in the structural and practical dynamics of the journalistic field. Whereas newsroom ethnographies could further advance our understanding of journalistic practices, innovative approaches to field- and content-analysis, such as DECA, could help uncover more elusive dynamics operating at the macro- and mezzo-levels. Future research should therefore continue to examine the evolving role of Twitter and other digital media in journalistic practice.

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Figure 1: Twitter Sample

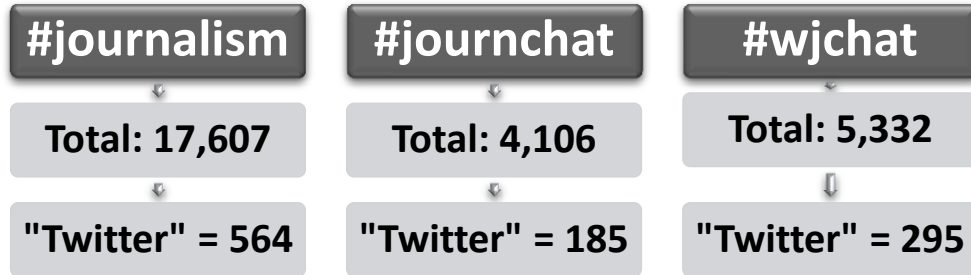


Figure 2: Elements of Practice

Elements of Practice		
<b>Habitus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practices</li><li>• Motives</li><li>• Dispositions</li><li>• Field background</li></ul>	<b>Capital</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social (Networks)</li><li>• Economic (Money)</li><li>• Cultural (Education &amp; Class-based knowledge)</li><li>• Symbolic (Reputation &amp; Prestige)</li></ul>	<b>Doxa</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Norms</li><li>• Values<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agreed upon (Orthodoxy)</li><li>• Debated (Heterodoxy)</li><li>• Taken-for-granted (Doxa)</li></ul></li></ul>

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<sup>1</sup> *Orthodox* values are those which fit the status quo of the field, while *heterodox* values are those which depart from accepted norms.

<sup>2</sup> There are also far too many differences than can be addressed here.

<sup>3</sup> This method of sampling was selected after a number of other attempts yielded irrelevant and unwieldy results.

<sup>4</sup> This process is consistent with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) 'grounded' approach, where initial 'open' coding was followed up by increasingly precise 'axial' and 'selective' coding.

<sup>5</sup> These practices are presented in no particular order.

<sup>6</sup> Rather, evidence of this practice emerged out of participant-observation and secondary accounts from Twitter-journalists.

<sup>7</sup> This focus on personal issues is what distinguishes the practice of “personal (inter)action” from “public engagement.”