

‘NEWS’ ANALYSIS RESEARCH PRESENTATION PROPOSAL

(Best completed electronically, expanding text boxes if necessary)

Student Name

Daniel Sansom

Research Project Title [should not be too long, suggest max 15 words]:

The impact of Twitter on traditional journalism.

Research Question [Definitive focus: Identifies object of study to realise objectives]:

How does Twitter affect traditional journalism?

Research Aims and Objectives [specific realistic goals/ends or intended outcomes & how to achieve them]:

To explore how the rise of social networking site Twitter has affected traditional journalism and attempt to answer some key questions:

- How does Twitter affect the role of a journalist?
- Does Twitter break news stories faster than traditional forms of journalism?
- Can Twitter be deemed a credible news source and can people always rely on the newsworthy information that users of the site produce?
- Are traditional forms of journalism suffering because of Twitter?

To achieve these objectives, it will be most appropriate to conduct research methods such as surveys and interviews. Specifically asking a number of professional journalists how Twitter has affected their work will lead to more detailed and in depth conclusions.

Context/Background & Rationale [link with society & similar work, past & current; why project is important now]:

An area definitely worth exploring and relevant today. Twitter continues to grow in popularity and the rise of citizen journalism has arguably questioned the purpose of traditional journalism in today's world.

In a modern world where people want information immediately, journalists are being forced to speed up the traditional journalistic process. As soon as a news outlet receives newsworthy material, people want to know. Waiting to complete or verify a story could mean a competitor delivers the information faster. In the past, media organisations were in competition with each other but today, if they hold on to a story too long, they risk being beaten to it by citizen journalists.

According to Arant and Meyer (2009), traditional journalism stresses values such as fairness and objectivity so as to establish its credibility among readers. Traditional journalism has also been used to describe forms of journalistic discourse that were originally offline, including both print and broadcast journalism (Nguyen and Western 2006).

Twitter never sleeps and neither does the modern journalist, who is scanning updates 24/7, posting and retweeting.

Literature Review [theories to be employed in making sense of, or analysing, the chosen topic, citing theorists, most common theories in literature]:

A study conducted by Farida Vis (2013) found that Twitter can be used as an effective reporting tool. Journalists Paul Lewis and Ravi Somaiya made extensive use of the social networking site during the UK riots in 2011, and as a result attracted a significant number of followers to their Twitter feed.

Ali Ahmad (2010) suggests that Twitter is now used as a “collaborative research tool by editors and journalists working on stories and blogs, both for ideas and to provide evidence for all branches of news - breaking, foreign, entertainment and others.”

However, people still use traditional forms of journalism in order to verify information. Traditional media exist for authoritative news sources. According to Haewoon Kwak et al (2010), people who have a good social position still read newspapers and watch the news on television. Therefore, the frame of traditional news media remains important.

Matt Rosoff (2011) claims that Twitter is ‘faster, more accurate, and more entertaining than any other news source out there.’

Farhi (2009) refers to how newspapers have adapted to the rise of Twitter by creating their own Twitter accounts to post swift-changing updates following natural disasters in their areas, and how reporters now routinely tweet from all kinds of events including speeches, conferences and sporting events.

Methodology and Sources [Tools/techniques to be employed in the gathering and analysis of data; methods of accessing/acquiring data or evidence or information; sources of the data]:

Qualitative Methods

Telephone Survey

Ask a total of one hundred professional journalists a series of pre-determined questions.

The telephone survey with each participant will be structured, where the researcher will ask questions from a standardised list, where each respondent (journalist) is asked the same questions in the same order. A telephone survey allows a two-way interaction between the researcher and the respondent, and this is also cheaper and quicker than face-to-face interviews. Questions may be open or closed, and in this instance both types are appropriate as only some of the responses can be predicted.

Interview

Specifically interview professional journalists who are working/have worked in traditional journalism and understand how Twitter has had an impact on the industry.

An interview, unlike most surveys, can provide in depth information around the topic.

Although structured interviews increase the likelihood that the findings of the research can be generalised and can be used to test specific hypotheses around the topic, the most appropriate type of interview in this case would be a semi-structured interview. This combines a pre-determined set of open questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further. This is appropriate because although some responses can be anticipated, it may be necessary to explore others in greater depth.

Data Analysis – When qualitative methods have been used for data collection, methods should be analysed using established methods such as content analysis (Kelley et al 2003).

Ethical Implications (if any) [briefly indicate whether/how there is an ethical implication for the researcher in this work. What do you need to consider as a researcher?]:

Survey

Informed Consent

- Purpose of survey – A respondent should understand the general purpose of a survey.
- Sponsor – The respondent should be told the source of funding of a survey.
- Method of selection – The interviewee should be told how they were selected.
- Access to data – The respondent should be told how the data will be used and who will have access to it.

Interview

- Confidentiality is an important ethical consideration. Interviewees should only be named if they have given their permission.
- Permission to record the interview or take notes should be given by the interviewee before the interview begins and arguably, this material should only be used how the interviewee expects it to be used.

The researcher must also decide whether to challenge the interviewee, protect the participant, be objective or be involved, and use particular quotes when reporting the interview.

Strengths/Weaknesses of the Project [briefly indicate any strengths or weaknesses of the project across all areas]:

Strengths

- Twitter is used by millions of people, including thousands of journalists. Therefore, the conclusions of this research are likely to interest many individuals, not just those working in the media industry.
- In a survey, the breadth of coverage of many journalists means it is more likely than some other approaches to obtain data based on a representative sample. Therefore, it can be generalizable to the media industry.
- In an interview, any ambiguous questions can be clarified and interviews have the ability to research a topic in greater depth.

Weaknesses

- In a survey, the data that is produced is likely to lack details or depth on the topic being investigated.
- In an interview, respondents may give answers that they believe the interviewer wants to hear, rather than saying what they actually believe.
- When conducting the research, limited resources, limited time and limited money are clearly major issues.

References

- Ahmad, A., 2010. Is Twitter a useful tool for journalists? *Journal of Media Practice* [online], 11 (2), 145-155.
- Allan, S., 2013. *Citizen Witnessing: Revisioning Journalism in Times of Crisis*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Arant, D. and Meyer, P., 2009. Public and Traditional Journalism: A Shift in Values? *Journal of Media Ethics*, 13, 205-218.

Farhi, P., 2009. The Twitter explosion: whether they are reporting about it, finding sources on it or urging viewers, listeners and readers to follow them on it, journalists just can't seem to get enough of the social networking service. Just how effective is it as a journalism tool? *American Journalism Review* [online], 31, 26-31.

Kelley, K., Clark, B., Brown, V. and Sitzia, J., 2003. Good practice in the conduct and reporting of survey research. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 15 (3), 261-266.

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