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Triangulating Methods in the Study of Role Performance

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News work in the early 21st century is not just changing. It is changing with unrelenting speed, unprecedented scope, and unforeseeable consequences. This chapter focuses on what sort of methodical inquiry might best inform scholarly assessment of journalistic role performance amid this turbulence. The proposition here is that just as the optimal performance of contemporary journalism involves a holistic amalgamation of inward-facing professional sensibilities and outward-facing social ones, the optimal conduct of contemporary journalism research is similarly holistic. It addresses questions that can best be answered quantitatively – questions such as who is performing which tasks, and what the results look like – and also, crucially, the "how" and "why" questions at which qualitative scholars excel. Those questions typically are dealt with in separate studies, but the suggestion here is that the segmentation is not only unnecessary but also diminishes our ability to understand what's really going on. Although there are innumerable ethnographic studies of newsrooms, their focus tends to be on journalistic activities and practitioners' understanding or interpretation of those activities, with little attempt to explore broader social or civic roles or the ways in which journalists perform them. There are even more surveys and content analyses, but most are also narrowly focused.

Moreover, the proposition here is that rather than using qualitative findings to "flesh out the data" from quantitative studies, the reverse sequence often would be preferable. Because the changes are so dramatic and the environment so infused with uncertainty, it may be best to start by examining the meanings that practitioners assign to their own norms, roles, and activities – information best gathered through thematic analysis of ethnographic data – as well as the ways in which those aspects of news work are performed in real environments optimally understood through immersive observation. Beginning with the observed performance and the perceived rationale for it gives the researcher a real-world framework within which to consider more generalizable but less richly contextualized data.

The depth and particularity of qualitative approaches offer another crucial benefit in the current media environment: They enable researchers to incorporate the diversity of contemporary journalism into their thinking more readily than do quantitative methods, with their emphasis on sampling frames and statistical measurement. Journalism today still takes place in traditional newsrooms, of course, but also in start-up enterprises, at bloggers' work spaces, and in all the unpredictable places around the globe in which news happens to occur – performative spaces hard to reach with instruments that can pass the muster of scientific reliability and validity tests. This fluidity underlines the value of foregrounding the insights that qualitative research can yield before turning to what can be measured and how best to go about it.

Mix and match

Scholars have long realized the benefits of examining a problem from as many diverse methodological perspectives as possible (Denzin, 1970), and there is a growing sense that the divide between qualitative and quantitative approaches is a false dichotomy. The two are neither interchangeable nor mutually exclusive but rather can be seen as interactive places on a continuum of exploration, invoked at different points during the investigation of a subject of interest, with feedback from each maximizing the strengths of both (Ridenour & Newman, 2008). Indeed, as Robinson and Mendelson (2012) have suggested, some questions can best be answered only when both positivist and interpretive methods are applied. Nonetheless, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single communications study is relatively rare (Cooper, Potter, & Dupagne, 1994; Kamhawi & Weaver, 2003; Trumbo, 2004).

There are obviously a great many ways in which methodologies can be fruitfully combined. This section offers a handful of possibilities and illustrates them with examples from published studies of journalistic role performance within news organizations. The qualitative methods emphasized here are interviews, which typically yield data that are then interrogated through discourse or textual analysis, and ethnographic observation. Of course, textual and discourse analysis are also widely used as primary qualitative tools for analyzing journalistic texts of various kinds. And humanities and social science scholars, including those working in communication disciplines, also draw on many other qualitative approaches, from focus groups to phenomenology. But methodologies that involve a researcher's presence within a physical workspace and engagement with individual news practitioners are foregrounded here because the insights they yield are of particular value as companions to quantitative approaches to understanding both journalists as people (such as through survey research) and texts as journalistic output (such as through content analysis) in a period of rapid and continual change.

Interviews, ethnographic observation and content analysis

Journalists engage in particular activities, in accordance (or not) with particular professional norms and standards, with the goal of generating a bounded output: a story or other form of structured, broadly accessible content. Content analyses provide a systematic way of categorizing and then statistically analyzing aspects of that output in order to more fully understand it (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). The method optimally answers the “what” question: What is the nature of the content generated through the performance of journalistic roles (see Mellado & Lagos, 2014)?

But a content analysis cannot address questions of “why” that content and not something different was generated, nor questions of “how” it was produced – what decisions were made, what cognitive frameworks shaped those decisions, what activities were involved at various stages, and so on. To get at those levels of meaning, scholars have had to gather information from journalists somehow. One approach is to rely on survey data (see Tandoc, Hellmueller, & Vos, 2013). But additional and potentially richer meanings can be obtained by talking with journalists as well as observing what practitioners actually do.

Boczkowski’s (2010) case studies of Argentinian media outlets offer an excellent example of how interviews, observation, and content analysis can collectively illuminate how news production roles and routines are changing in response to digital information abundance. His work encompassed an ethnographic field study in a selected newsroom; interviews with journalists there and at two additional news outlets (and, subsequently, with news consumers); and a content analysis of the output from each newsroom across several points in time. The result was a richly nuanced picture of changes in journalistic role performance – from the search for and presentation of original information to a greatly expanded emphasis on monitoring and imitation – and a resulting homogenization of news content. It is possible the quantitative analysis alone could have suggested content overlaps but unlikely it could so clearly have shown why they existed – and why they are virtually certain to exist in other cultural contexts, as well.

A similarly rich example emerges from Ryfe's (2012) study of three US regional newspapers in transition, including ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation, interviews, and a content analysis. His goal was to learn how – or whether – journalists were breaking from traditional role perceptions and performative actions in response to a digital environment. Here too, the combination of methods enabled him to explore the context of change and not just its effects on people or products. Where Boczkowski found that journalists were adapting but not in socially (or professionally) desirable ways, Ryfe found that they weren't adapting terribly well at all. "For the most part, they continue to gather the same sorts of information, from the same sorts of people, and package it in the same news forms they have used for decades," he wrote (p. 3).

Across the Atlantic, Fenton and her colleagues (2010) drew on interviews with 160 journalists, ethnographies in three newsrooms, and an online content analysis to investigate news production practices at British news outlets. Their work sought to explore a host of issues related to the ways in which "technological, economic and social changes have reconfigured news journalism" (p. 4) in the United Kingdom, revealing "an industry and a practice in flux" (p. 13). Although they concluded that neither an optimistic nor a pessimistic outlook is wholly correct, they cautioned that digital technologies ultimately do contribute to "the stifling of journalism for the public good and in the public interest," with the drive to fill more space more quickly leading to a reduction in the diversity of sources and stories (p. 15). Here again, a triangulation of methods and their application across multiple news contexts proved invaluable for understanding what is going on, why it is happening, and ultimately why it matters.

Interviews, ethnographic observation and surveys

Surveys are a second quantitative method widely used in journalism studies and indeed in all forms of social science research. Where content analyses can address the end result of journalistic role performance, surveys can be used to query large numbers of journalists (or audience members or other constituencies) about role conceptions and activities in carrying out those roles. Though their tools differ, both survey researchers and ethnographers ask subject-based kinds of questions (Huxman & Allen, 2004). They therefore are useful for addressing “who” and “what” questions that a content analysis cannot: Who are the people engaged in journalistic activities, and what do these people do, think they do, or think about what they do?

Because quantitative surveys are optimal for understanding a population too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2014), they are profitably complemented by qualitative methods that enable observation of population subsets. Despite the possibilities, journalism researchers rarely conduct both large-scale random-sample surveys and in-depth interviews. But a few examples indicate what might be gained by doing so. The widely cited State of the News Media report, produced annually by the Pew Research Journalism Project to capture the circumstances of American journalists and journalism as they change year by year, draws on surveys, content analyses, and interviews to provide “the clearest sense of what is occurring” (Pew Research, 2014). In Brazil, Herscovitz (2004) paired a survey of 1,000 newspaper journalists with in-depth interviews of prominent journalists in the nation’s main media hub to explore how Brazilian newsroom practice has been influenced by other national models. And in Sweden, researchers seeking to understand the relationship between political journalists and their sources content analyzed national news outlets, then interviewed a small group of leading political journalists and party officials, and finally conducted a massive survey encompassing politicians, journalists, and citizens (Strömbeck & Nord, 2006).

Somewhat more commonly, non-random surveys have been used as a component of newsroom case studies, also informed by interviews and ethnographic observation. In Russo's (1998) study of journalists' organizational and professional identification, for example, 170 employees of a metropolitan newspaper completed a survey while another 58 were interviewed; survey respondents indicated stronger identification with the profession than with their particular employer, while the interviews enabled the researcher to see attitudinal shifts over time. Another approach to triangulation involves giving questionnaires to interview respondents, providing complementary data sets from the same individuals. Studies of convergence at four U.S. news organizations in the early 2000s used this approach, with 120 journalists interviewed and then asked to complete a questionnaire. Findings highlighted the potential but also the cultural and ethical challenges of convergence, especially for print journalists socialized to a particular approach to news construction (Singer, 2004). More recently, Ekdale and his colleagues (2014) investigated the impact of continual and rapid change on a mid-sized US newsroom. That study combined two waves of a questionnaire, provided to all newsroom employees, and interviews with 20 of those employees in order to understand journalists' responses to a work atmosphere pervaded by job insecurity.

And of course, survey data from one study has been widely used to inform interview questions asked in another. For example, the questionnaires constructed by Weaver and his Indiana University colleagues (2007; Willnat & Weaver, 2014) to gather extensive data about

American journalists every 10 years since the 1970s have proved useful to a multitude of other scholars around the world and in a variety of contexts. To take just two examples, Sachsman and his colleagues (2010) used the Indiana survey instrument and responses to inform their interviews with more than 650 environmental journalists, while Pasti (2005) used them as a framework for exploring journalistic culture in Russia through more than 40 in-depth interviews.

So although they may seem an odd couple, surveys and qualitative interviews or ethnographies can be profitably paired in lots of ways. It should be noted, however, that setting aside non-random samples derived from a pool of case study participants, as in the studies highlighted above, it is unusual for the qualitative data to be gathered first. Far more common is for the survey to be used as a framework for structuring interviews. This gives the researcher a useful tool – but it also inherently creates a bounded starting point for the new investigation.

Interviews, ethnographic observation and Q method

Before turning to optimal methodological approaches for studying ongoing changes in journalistic roles and practices, it is worth highlighting one less common combination: Q method as a quantitative companion to interview and ethnographic techniques.

Q method is the objective study of subjectivity, or an individual's point of view on any given topic of personal or social importance. Factor analysis is used to identify clusters of opinion based on subjects' sorting of a set of relevant statements, yielding Q factors that are groups of people who share beliefs, attitudes, and opinions on that topic (McKeown & Thomas, 1988). The method stresses the preservation of individual viewpoints and typically is used with a relatively small set of respondents selected because of who they are rather than whom they represent (Lipschultz, 1991). That is, Q method is designed to provide a nuanced look at perspectives on the topic of interest, without addressing questions about how many people share such perspectives in the world at large (Brown, 1980)

Although it uses statistical techniques to derive meaning from the data, Q method is appealing to qualitative scholars because it enables an understanding of “life as lived from the standpoint of the person living it that is typically passed over by quantitative procedures” (Brown, 1996, p. 561). Both Q method and the qualitative approaches inherent in ethnographic research are thus based on what individuals say, either indirectly through their sorting of statements or directly through their comments to an interviewer. Moreover, many researchers using Q method supplement it with interviews, asking subjects to describe or discuss their reactions to the various statements (Kampen & Tamás, 2014).

Journalism scholars have used Q method to explore practitioners’ attitudes about their roles related to environmental issues (Giannoulis, Botetzagias, & Skanavis, 2010), international news (Kim, 2002), civic or public journalism (Gade et al., 1998), and courthouse reporting (Lipschultz, 1991), among other topics. However, despite the synergies, use of Q method in combination with qualitative observational and/or interview-based approaches is rare and tends to focus on news or advertising audiences (Gustafson, Hanley, & Popovich, 2008; Perälä, 2014) rather than practitioners. One exception was a mid-1990s study of newspaper journalists’ attitudes toward the then-novel Internet. It involved ethnographic observation in three newsrooms and interviews with a total of 66 journalists; 27 journalists in the same newsrooms also completed Q sorts. Factor analysis suggested three clusters of attitudes that, arguably, still hold up 20 years later. One group was enthusiastic about new technologies and change in general; another was nervous or even fearful, and more likely to perceive drawbacks than benefits; and a third group had nothing major against new tools but felt those tools had little to do with them, their jobs, or their roles (Singer, 1998/1999).

In summary, then, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to understand journalists and journalism is hardly new – but also hardly common. When Kamhawi and Weaver (2003) analyzed articles published in 10 major communication journals during the 1980s and 1990s, they found only a small handful – 1.2% of a total of nearly 350 articles – used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, and the situation is unlikely to have changed dramatically since. The rest of this chapter provides a brief overview of today's rapidly changing media universe, then offers suggestions for seizing an opportunity to enrich what we know about journalistic role performance in this fluid environment by tackling the topic from multiple methodological directions.

Journalistic Role Performance in a Digital Space

This chapter began by suggesting two aspects of the contemporary journalism environment that make it particularly well-suited to exploration using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. One is its increasingly holistic nature, encompassing both professionally bounded and socially unbounded sensibilities; the other is its ubiquity, the vast diversity of places in which something identifiable as "journalism" is done. This section offers a bit more detail about each, with the goal of complementing what others have written elsewhere in this volume.

One obvious element of holistic journalism is its multimodality. A generation ago, the roles of most practitioners were limited to activities dealing with a single communicative form: words or still images or sound or video (or, maybe, digital bits and bytes), but seldom more than one of those together. Contemporary journalists work across many or even all of these modalities in a typical day, and despite continuing expressions of concern (Lee-Wright & Phillips, 2012), the incorporation of an expanded set of practices and accompanying roles has become the norm.

But there are many other ways in which journalistic role performance in a digital age is a more inclusive endeavor than in the past. Boundaries that once were definitive – around practitioners, sets of practices, and the resulting products – have all but dissolved. Countless industry and academic discussions of "who is a journalist" and "what is journalism" have yielded no consensus, but the fact that the questions are being asked suggests the evident permeability of borders around journalistic roles and the kind of person who enacts them. Virtually any literate individual with a mobile or other digital device can create and disseminate journalistic content, even if the definition is limited to content that meets normative criteria such as veracity or criteria of "newsworthiness" such as impact.

For the newsroom workers whose role performances are the primary consideration of this book, the dissolution of clear parameters around previously uncontested occupational turf (Lewis, 2012; Lowrey, 2006) has had numerous effects. One is that the assessment of role performance has become far more outward-facing. Until the very last years of the 20th century, this assessment was almost entirely an internal affair. Journalists considered themselves professionals and, like all professionals, they asserted autonomy in defining the nature of the service they provided and in assessing its quality (Larson, 1977). Although this autonomy has been perhaps most ardently articulated in the United States, where its preservation is written into the nation's constitution, it has served those upholding the banner of a "free press" all around the world. It entails both freedom *from* external oversight and freedom *to* make relevant decisions about everything from what story to put on the front page to which job applicant to hire (or fire).

It has privileged internal assessments of what constitutes not only appropriate roles but also commendable enactment of those roles – whose work warrants promotion or prestige or prizes.

In today's digital environment, however, the assessment as well as the actual performance of journalists' roles involves far more people than a relatively small circle of sources and colleagues. Journalists grudgingly admitted audiences into the circle when their stories were opened to comments and their websites to other forms of user-generated content in the late 2000s; practitioners' subsequent response to social media, which puts them in constant contact with unlimited numbers of people in constantly fluctuating permutations, has been more enthusiastic. The result is that many more people now have meaningful influence on the process of making those once-autonomous professional decisions. Constantly updated and excruciatingly detailed web analytics make it increasingly hard to distinguish the extent to which decisions about a given story are driven by its quantifiable popularity rather than, or in addition to, "professional" assessment of its value (Tandoc & Thomas, 2015). Indeed, the prominence and therefore the impact of any given story are now largely in the hands of the audience (Singer, 2014) – are people talking about it on Twitter? are they sharing it on Facebook? are enough of them clicking to boost it into the "most-read" story box? – and social marketing has become a key role for people who once only had to please their editor.

These changes and others accompanying the transition to a digital environment also make journalistic role performance far more fluid than in the past. The activities carried out by people who define themselves as journalists are constantly mutating. Long-standing functions – gathering facts, verifying source credibility, turning information into stories – must be adapted to changing realities. New functions arise, too. A generation ago, few journalists ever interacted with readers or viewers, let alone engaged in the nearly continuous exchange demanded by a format such as Twitter. Few were expected to produce multiple versions of a story across multiple platforms, then to publicize that story themselves across another set of platforms. Today, they do, and tomorrow, there will be new tasks to perform and roles to play. Digital media are in constant flux, and journalists must adapt accordingly.

Before returning to the importance of using multiple methods to study digital role performance, one more key aspect of a digital media space should be highlighted: its ubiquity. Digital media are literally everywhere. Something identifiable as "journalism" is being done today in a vast diversity of physical and virtual spaces. Even setting aside the shopkeeper with her mobile camera or the student with his constantly open social media feed, shrinking percentages of journalistic work originates in a traditional news organization today compared with five, 10, or 20 years ago. The number and reach of digital-only media outlets has exploded. Some are among the biggest, buzziest names in the industry – Buzzfeed and Huffington Post, Vice and Vox – while others jostle for attention from audiences and financial backers. "Entrepreneurial journalism" has emerged as a term conveying greater "independence, empowerment and self-direction" for those engaged in it than for those who see themselves as self-employed or as freelance journalists (Baines & Kennedy, 2010: 103). Journalistic enterprises, some sustainable and others struggling, have proliferated in myriad shapes and sizes, from investigative journalism consortia to hyperlocal websites to niche offerings devoted to virtually any topic imaginable.

There's also a darker side to this story, of course. The ubiquity of information has forced the price of its consumption nearly to nil, but the cost of producing journalism remains relatively high. The collapse of traditional media business models based on a closer balance between information supply and demand, from advertisers as well as audiences, has put thousands of journalists out on the streets; digital media start-ups offer opportunities for journalists to have their work published but, for most, few corresponding opportunities to be paid at a livable level on a regular basis. Moreover, role performance no longer begins and ends with the creation of a "story"; it must include many of the tasks that an employer undertook when the journalist had one, from marketing to accounting to the acquisition and maintenance of suitable technology. The result is fragmentation not only of role performance itself but also of the power and agency that once accrued to journalists. On the one hand, the field of journalism is "losing its traditional bearings and casting its practitioners in a new entrepreneurial ideal of being free agents," explained Deuze and Marjoribanks (2009) in their introduction to a special issue of *Journalism* devoted to news work. "On the other hand, these professionals are not perceived to have any individual or collective power to enact some kind of meaningful change to the system" (p. 558).

How Might We Study It?

This description of the nature and impact of digital media returns us to the question of how we might study the massive, ongoing changes. This concluding section offers a few arguments for the value of using quantitative and qualitative methods together to study contemporary journalistic role performance, and for foregrounding qualitative methods in doing so. The suggestions for potential studies are intended only as examples to illustrate the possibilities.

Both surveys and content analyses take a fixed universe of subjects – people or texts – as their starting point. The researcher must begin by putting definitional boundaries around what is to be studied, for reasons related to the logistics of a manageable bit of research as well as the appropriate application of statistical instruments. In a traditional media world, creating those definitions was fairly straightforward. Journalists enacted their roles from the base of a newsroom, and they could be located there relatively easily. The output of their role performance was a print or broadcast story, and it too could be readily identified. But while the number of journalists employed in a newsroom has decreased, the "news hole" to be filled online has expanded exponentially. News organizations now routinely publish content from freelancers, from other content providers (traditional and not), and from social media. Thus both the producer and the product of "journalism" have become much harder to isolate but no less worthy of scholarly attention. Two suggestions follow:

> * The role performance of freelance journalists is woefully understudied; their isolated and perpetually tenuous working conditions make "sampling" them difficult. Yet individuals are easy to find. There is much to be learned about contemporary journalism through interviews with freelancers and observations of their work practices, and even more to be learned by subsequently surveying editors (a readily identified population) about their interactions with these piecemeal workers.

> * An emerging practice, particularly in the United States, is the "outsourcing" of investigative journalism to reporters working for or funded through non-profit organizations such as ProPublica or the Center for Public Integrity. The ways in which these journalists enact the quintessential journalistic function, holding the powerful in society to account (Willnat & Weaver, 2014), also is only minimally understood. Ethnographic studies of the non-profits would tell us much about how investigative journalism is developing outside of traditional newsrooms, and interviews with the people producing it would help clarify their role performance in relation not only to the

public but also to their "clients" at the legacy organizations publishing or re-publishing their work. Q methodology offers a fruitful option for further quantitative study here. It could, for instance, be employed to compare attitudes about work and role performance among the non-profit investigators and investigative journalists who continue to work directly for a traditional media outlet.

Journalistic start-ups also are slippery subjects. New ones constantly appear, but many soon disappear. Some operate out of small rented facilities, others out of spare bedrooms or shared offices; a few become big enough and stable enough to inhabit something we might recognize as a newsroom. Both staffing and funding of these enterprises tend to be fluid in their early years. Most entrepreneurial journalism initiatives offer a niche product and focus their attention and energies on creating content and attracting attention around narrowly defined topics, but a handful attract multitudes and exert considerable influence over the developing media landscape. Lucky? Shrewd? Innovative? Well-financed? The trade press covers start-ups extensively, even obsessively, but few researchers to date have dug deeper. Again, this may be at least in part because the population is difficult to define, particularly if we approach the task with tools that require precise measurement. Two more suggestions:

* One of the challenges of entrepreneurial journalism directly related to role performance involves the need to adhere to journalistic norms of independence while simultaneously courting audiences and financial backers. Journalists seeking to get new enterprises off the ground wear multiple hats every day, including those of marketer, advertising executive, and business manager. The potential for conflicts of interest is great (Ward, 2009), but we know little about how – or whether – entrepreneurs are avoiding such

conflicts. In-depth interviews with entrepreneurs across a range of content types, funding models, and cultural contexts would significantly extend our understanding of the ethical issues they encounter and how they address those issues. Pairing these insights with various forms of quantitative data, from content analyses of start-up websites to surveys of key constituencies – audiences, advertisers, legacy media competitors – would enrich our knowledge of a topic that to date has generated vague concern but little concrete data.

* Some start-ups succeed; many fail (Bruno & Nielsen, 2012). A mantra of entrepreneurialism is that valuable lessons lie within every failure, and indeed that failing and learning from the experience are crucial to ultimate success (Briggs, 2012). Yet as journalism scholars, we know next to nothing about the lessons taken away by those whose enterprises prove unsustainable. What went wrong, why, and what was learned from the experience? What comes next? Again, in-depth interviews should form the starting point for a topic about which so little is currently known. Surveys of a broader population of journalism entrepreneurs – those who have created a sustainable funding model and those who have not – could then enable comparison of role performance to generate a deeper understanding of what practices lead to journalistic as well as economic success (see Sirkkunen & Cook, 2012).

Nor have we looked closely enough inside contemporary newsrooms, which also are changing dramatically. Of particular relevance is a growing diversity of roles now being enacted within newsroom walls. Programmers are working alongside journalists, and a small but increasing number of journalists are learning programming skills to massage databases of information and mine them for stories. Engineers are helping shape stories that rely on drones to gather information, and software specialists are developing sophisticated verification tools to help assess social media feeds. Digital artists and game designers are creating newly engaging forms of journalistic storytelling. In general, what traditionally was a linear process based on the sequential work of individuals – reporters, editors, layout or production specialists – increasingly involves iterative teamwork among people with diverse areas of expertise. Some researchers have begun exploring these new newsroom roles and the work processes they engender (Lewis & Usher, 2013; Tremayne & Clark, 2014), but here again, we have a great deal yet to learn. Another two suggestions are:

* Ethnographic observation of cutting-edge newsrooms, and interviews with the people occupying novel roles, is under way, but many opportunities remain. What is the nature of the interactions among traditional and non-traditional news workers, and how do these interactions feed into the end product? How do people with different backgrounds understand their role, and to what extent do the goals and aspirations that each group holds as content creators overlap? Interview responses would be ideal for the subsequent construction of a set of Q statements. The factor analysis process of Q methodology would point toward a more nuanced understanding of how journalists think about their increasingly diverse roles and how they enact them than can be offered through categorization by expertise – programmer, designer, engineer, journalist.

* These changes in staffing result in different sorts of content. Interview data can explore what producers hope to achieve by working collaboratively with new tools. What kinds of stories are told better with visuals obtained from drones than from other kinds of

cameras? How are decisions made about the stories contained within available data sets and about the optimal way to tell those stories? How do people of varying backgrounds conceptualize the audience – both prospective audiences and audiences who already are engaged? Obviously, such insights can then be paired with content analyses to understand the nature of the journalistic output itself and how well it matches the creators' conceptions of it.

Although there are a great many other aspects of newsroom change to study, one last example is – change itself. While it is valuable to examine its components, the transformations of the past 20 years have been so substantial, so multi-faceted, and so continuous that it becomes difficult to see the forest amid the rapidly proliferating trees. Journalists' foundational understanding of their own place in society rests on notions of timely and ethical public service that, I believe, continue to be central to their performance. But that understanding rests as well on long-standing notions of objectivity, impartiality, and autonomy (Deuze, 2008) that have been significantly challenged as digital technologies have evolved, radically altering the capabilities and expectations of audiences and journalists' relationships with those audiences; the economic underpinnings of all forms of media; and the scale and scope of information now available globally, instantly, and in nearly infinite variety. Only by bringing diverse methodological tools to bear can we make sense of these ongoing and intertwined cultural upheavals.

This chapter has suggested not only that all these aspects of changing role performance, both narrowly and broadly defined, are best studied with a combination of methods but also that a qualitative approach should be the starting point. That is in part because non-traditional sites of journalistic work are increasingly likely to be physically dispersed and occupationally diverse, as outlined above, creating significant challenges for methods driven by the need for precisely defined populations of study about which generalizable statements might be made. That is largely a logistical concern, though. The larger conceptual issue is that with a nuanced and rapidly changing topic such as journalistic role performance, findings based on content creators' articulation of their experiences and perceptions seem particularly valuable as a basis for ongoing exploration of practitioner roles and the activities surrounding their performance. These articulations give us a view from the inside; only once equipped with these insights are scholars, as outsiders, ready to apply our more "objective" measurement tools. In other words, we need to ground our work in the lived experiences of those in the midst of change, using that knowledge as a basis for the subsequent clarification and refinement that statistically grounded approaches can provide.

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