The twitterisation of journalism: charting a research agenda for 'social journalism'

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The twitterisation of journalism: charting a research agenda for 'social journalism'

Abstract
Social media is transforming professional journalism. And the speed of the real-time revolution raises significant challenges and opportunities for journalists, their publishers and journalism educators. But it also necessitates a rigorous academic research agenda. The issues confronting journalism in the social media space include fundamental shifts in the practice of verification, the merger of private lives and professional practice, and the new journalistic role of community engagement. BBC Head of Global News Peter Horrocks said in February 2010 that social media practice for journalists was no longer discretionary. But this means that the professional training of journalists in social media theory and practice is also essential. And fundamental to teaching and training journalists in this new form of 'social journalism' should be cuttingedge academic research; relevant to industry; in the field of journalism studies. Journalism research should be informed by journalistic practice and have a professionally relevant purpose. This paper maps the research agenda of the author’s PhD dissertation on the transformative impact of social media on journalism, titled The Twitterisation of Journalism. It will document the research questions underpinning this dissertation which can be adapted to any social journalism research project. The research questions to be mapped via this paper include: 1) Changing practices of verification under the influence of social media and their professional implications 2) The impact of the convergence of private and professional journalistic lives in the social media space 3) The emerging role of audience engagement and its impact on news and current affairs journalists and journalism 4) Conflict and complaints: The impact on journalists and their employers of being openly and instantly confronted with audience complaints 5) What are the impacts on journalists' workload, productivity and wellbeing of 24/7 real-time social media practice and engagement? This paper will seek to present an adaptable map of research questions designed to frame academic inquiry in a field that requires synchronising with the rapidly changing social media landscape as it impacts dramatically on professional journalism practice, ethics and education.

Keywords
agenda, social, journalism, twitterisation, charting, research

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