Experimenting with the Future of Journalism:

Social capital as a desideratum for networked journalism research

Introduction:

As this paper is being written, there are "more people on Facebook than there were on the planet 200 years ago" (Russell 2012); of them, 57% will talk to people more online than they do in real life (Facebook 2011); and of those who will be the "leaders of tomorrow": 48% of them will get the majority of their news from Facebook (Facebook 2011 - statistic refers to "young Americans"). These statistics are symptomatic of sustained research focuses in the field, namely what online social networks mean for people's life chances (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe 2007; Perlmutter 2007), what they mean for a democratic society (Briggs 2007), and what news media's relationship is to such changing dynamics (Habermas 2006; Clark and Slyke 2011). This paper takes an interdisciplinary approach to discussing the latter of these focuses by outlining how research in news media innovation can benefit from a multifaceted perspective. Specifically, the ensuing discussion will look at how research into social capital building online from the broader field of Sociology intersects with Journalism research in this context. This article will first provide a brief background on the networked news model. Second, it will introduce social capital as a theoretical framework for such research. Last, it will discuss experimentation as a method of investigation for future research.

Abstract

The aim of this article is to position social capital as a theoretical framework for investigating online communities, specifically pro-am operations. It will review pertinent literature on social capital and the future of journalism in this context, and detail how the broader field of Sociology and this dynamic field of Journalism converge to produce a unique opportunity for pro-am research. Currently, much concern has been expressed regarding the future of journalism institutions in society, and while journalism itself is seen as a cornerstone of democracy, the form of structures that facilitate such practice has been questioned. Compounding this problem is a lack of research that produces data suitable for meta-analysis. For example, case-study data of start-up operations in this volatile field do not provide sufficient grounds for conclusions that could result in evidence-based policy. In response to these dynamics, this article will propose experimentation as a method of research for pro-am start-ups.

Keywords: social capital, networked journalism, pro-am, online communities, journalism, new media

Literature Review:

New Media

In 1977, Daniel Bell, one of the first sociologists to explore the social impact of digital communications media, predicted that the "social organization of the new 'communications' technology" would be a fundamental issue for the "post-industrial society" (Bell 1977, 38). Bell's proposition serves as a useful guide for analysing the relationship between new media and democracy, namely identifying opportunities for 'social organisation' in new media that may fulfil the theoretical goals of Journalism in democracy, which newspapers were long thought to be most equipped to do.

The newspaper was once described by Walter Lippmann (1995, 44) as "in all literalness the bible of democracy, the book out of which a people determines its conduct". He emphasised "the power to determine each day what shall seem important and what shall be neglected" was one requiring of professional media the upmost responsibility and consideration of civil society (Lippmann 1995, 44). At the centre of Lippmann's philosophy is the

Steve J. Fox
Queensland University of Technology

notion that voting requires an informed citizenry, and that newspapers were the only institution truly equipped to fulfil this requirement (Lippmann 1995; Kovach and Rosenstiel 2004; Siebert, Peterson and Schramm 1956). However, across the board time spent by people with newspapers is declining, and the average age of newspaper readers if fifty-five years old. The question arises as to what 'bible of democracy' does a significant deal of the population now turn, because while time spent with newspapers is down, the total time spent with *news* remains unchanged (Gitlin 2011). Theorists are becoming increasingly persuaded that new media could not only be the answer, it could actually provide an opportunity for increased civic participation through content creation (Usher 2011, 265).

Klinenberg (2005, 190) explains that Web 2.0 provides an environment that requires less economic, social and cultural capital to produce and publish online. This is an important characteristic of Web 2.0, as Livingstone (2004, 11) avers, because the act of creating content is "crucial for the democratic agenda", with users becoming citizens, not merely consumers in the process. The professional news media here recognised this potential (though arguably not for the reasons put forth later in this paper) and have moved to encourage and incorporate 'citizen reporting' in their coverage, with notable outlets including CNN's iReport and South Korea's OhmyNews. In this way, citizens are able to reach large audiences with their reporting. However, many overestimate the democratic potential of the Internet as an equaliser of content.

As Hargittai (2000) emphasises, content creators can only reach large audiences if "gatekeepers and aggregators funnel them there", raising concerns about net neutrality (Usher 2011, 265). As it stands, Internet traffic is highly concentrated, and ultimately critics argue that this "new social and communication order of informational capitalism" is reproducing existing social inequalities, such as the inability to participate in democratic government (Preston 2001, 272). In turn, it reinforces the differences between people belonging to "information-rich and the information poor" demographics (Beckett 2008, 74). This raises concerns as to the nature of discussion online, and, by extension, the people contributing to this discussion. At this juncture, the role of journalists becomes a linchpin for democratic process, and it is Jurgen Habermas's public sphere theory that serves as a useful framework to advance this discussion.

Habermas (1991) proposed the theoretical concept of the publish sphere as a space in which the public body, informed by the media, could engage in critical debate, with the purpose of regulating civil society. Habermas argues the ideal public sphere was lost when the media became a commercial

interest, rather than informer, during the twentieth century (Habermas 1991, 50). By extending Habermas's line of reasoning, it could be suggested that what exists online today could be described as a quasi-public sphere, when assessed against the shifting notion of Journalism enabling it. However, such assessments neglect the capacity for cooperative efforts between professional journalists and citizens to further serve news media's democratic imperatives. Such collaboration is an objective of the networked news model, and networked journalism as articulated by Beckett (2008).

Networked News Models

As Perlmutter (2007) and Rodzvilla (2002) observe, news produced by professional media "often drives conversation in online communities" which allows for the construction of new angles, and a two-step flow to more equitable coverage of events by professional journalists. This forms the basis for the networked news model, or more broadly professional-amateur models, which focuses on the production of news through a potential network that utilizes public engagement. Jeff Jarvis (2007) explains the journalism behind such models as a structure that allows for the public to get involved in all stages of the journalistic process from inception to post-story corrections. In addition, this model of journalism addresses concerns raised previously by Rosen, cited in Clark and Slyke (2006), concerning the weakened "authority of the press to assume consensus, and set the terms of legitimate debate" online, because as Beckett (2008, 62) explains, sharing the news process with the public cultivates a relationship of "greater transparency and responsibility". It also has the potential to revitalise journalism's relationship with the public sphere, addressing criticisms stemming from Schudson's (2011, 239) work regarding the exclusivity of the public domain to "elites", and media's role in perpetuating that elitist tendency.

These technological developments are changing the available settings for this public sphere, and as Beckett argues, "networked journalism is the inevitable, or certainly the most desirable, response to this changing dynamic" (2002, 156). However, while the theoretical basis for this model may be persuasive, it assumes a certain level of social infrastructure with which to support processes of public consumption, understanding and utilisation of new media; in particular, the proficiency of digital tool use among the population, and willingness to engage in deeper, social interactions. Moreover, networked news models raise a number of challenges for the news media, which include how to distinguish professional journalism in this setting, how

authority is established, and the ability of such a model to fund quality journalism.

Online Settings for Network News Models

Studies have shown that the Internet now serves as the main source of younger generations' political information (Jr., Marton and Seo 2004; Levine and Lopez 2004). While this in itself is not cause for alarm, researchers have also found that younger demographics, often referred to as digital natives, adopt a 'snatch and grab philosophy' during Internet use (Sutherland-Smith 2002, 664). This raises doubts about the quality of engagement online for the purposes of democratic discourse, especially when there are currently four public relations professionals to every working journalist (McChesney and Nichols 2011, 105). Relatedly, sceptics predict the online public sphere will eventually become dominated by corporate identities and thus be altogether unresponsive to wholesome social inhabitancy (Beniger 1996; Lessig 1999).

In an alternative prediction, Gillmor (2004, 137) proposes new media could attract two key groups that may provide the basis for a fertile discussion ground: those who are engaged and active on the local level, and "heavy-duty" bloggers and website creators. These groups would theoretically form the backbone of a networked system where professional journalists could work together with the public to produce quality journalism. A criticism of this proposition would be that it is unrealistic to expect corporate restructuring and investment in journalists' skillsets during a time when revenue is declining, and pressure to produce is increasing. As Beckett (2008, 29) observes, every year there have been fewer journalists who are expected to create more content by harnessing technological efficiencies; however, as he proposes, "there does come a point where journalists are so efficient that they do not have time for the kind of networking, background research and speculative effort that brings long-term rewards in terms of editorial quality".

In response to these dynamics, further funding has been called upon to support these types of news models, including foundational support; calls for restructuring corporations as not-for-profit or private, in an effort to shield them from market pressures; and government subsides (McChesney and Nichols 2011). There are many 'experiments' happening in the field today, and promising models are emerging. However, as the next section will turn to, this field, involving professional-amateur collaborations, exemplified here as the networked news model, is relatively new. While it has garnered much

attention from practitioners, "think tanks", and assorted funding bodies alike, further research into the social dynamics underpinning these models is needed for long-term success.

Social Dynamics

A major criticism made about advocating models such as networked journalism and networked news models, is that they encourage leaving reporting or leads to "bloggers or to people who Twitter or to radio talk hosts…", which raises questions about how informed citizens would be if that were the case (Tom Brokaw as cited in Jackson 2011, 204). Jackson (2011, 205) argues these concerns are unfounded, and points to the bloggers at *Talking Points Memo* who won a Polk Award for bringing about national attention to the "Bush administration's politically motivated firings of Justice Department prosecutors" as an example of citizen journalism's potential. While Jackson stops short of advocating a total substitution of professional journalists with citizens, she does list a number of persuasive case studies to make the argument that the biggest opportunity presented in these turbulent times is to "provide a variety of perspectives … redefine the content of 'news' as more than what powerful people say and do [and] make a real difference in actual people's lives" (Jackson 2011, 208).

It is hard to argue with Jackson's imperatives for journalism, and indeed most of the literature supports her view. However, most claims that speak to the efficacy of citizen journalists are based on case studies (such as *Next Door Media, Star-Ledger* and the like), which do not take into account all the online public sphere dynamics, as Foremski explains in Overholser (2006, 19), "bloggers don't have to create content every day … citizen journalism does have an important place in the mediasphere but it cannot replace our need for professional journalists". Furthermore, a great deal of these notable citizen journalism outlets are supported by universities and institutes (Newkirk 2011, 255; Atton and Hamilton 2008, 74), supported by foundation funding (*Ford Foundation, Knight Foundation*), informed by think tanks (*Bells Labs*), and often started by professional journalists (McChesney and Pickard 2011). These circumstances draw attention to a key dependency: funding. This lends support to Foremski's assertion, that there is only so far altruism and activism can take quality journalism – if an ideal networked news model, or more broadly, any investigate not-for-profit outlet were to develop across the board, it would need to be a financially sustainable model capable of investing in long-term editorial quality.

Some believe networked news models will thrive in due course from entrepreneurial innovation, likening the current circumstances of the news media to that faced by the music and movie industries in their battle with piracy (Benkler 2011, 226). The standard of proof upon which these claims are based is questionable (citing convenient case studies), and raises doubts about the direction taken by some research in the field. There are several indicators in the literature that imply an unproblematic development of networked news models is unlikely, and that concerted effort may be needed to ensure sound Journalistic principles will underpin new media models of the future.

Implementing Networked News Models

Researchers have observed that early adoption of Internet technology for commercial development was underscored with the assumption that audiences' access options would remain constant, and in the case of major media producers, this essentially meant a reproduction of earlier media models (Castells 1996; Owen 1999). The same trend can be seen to an extent when considering legacy media, as Overholser (2006, 18) explains, "critics note that old-line media too often think that moving onto the Web is just a matter of shovelling their hard-copy content into a new place". Therefore, the ideal vision for news media must be to become more interactive, innovative, and accessible via multiple streams (Facebook, Twitter, RSS); and, in the process, invite citizens to be apart of the production. This line of reasoning takes an industry-down approach and runs the risk that the online dominance of professional media outlets may be capitalised upon for financial imperatives rather than journalistic principles. This notion invokes concerns Bourdieu (1986, 9) had about "corporations moving in on online public spaces of discussion".

McChesney (2011, 304) takes this idea further and warns that the "eventual course of the Internet will be determined by where the most money can be made regardless of social and political impact". While at this time it is impossible to validate such a claim, it serves as a discussion point to address the impact of so-called "content mills" that have emerged under the guise of egalitarian, citizen journalism operations (Frank 2011, 116). *Demand Media* is an example of this phenomenon, which uses an extensive network of freelancers to generate short articles based upon what people are searching for online, and what advertisers will pay. According to *Demand Media*, this encourages a conversation with the customer and fosters communities of interest. However, the "real source of the mills' magic" as Frank (2011, 114)

argues, is that it provides an "inventive way to minimize labor costs" and draws attention to the nature of entrepreneurialism left unchecked in this field. Several newspapers and online outfits have outsourced to *Demand Media*, and claim this is a great opportunity to streamline the efforts of citizens to break into the news market. On the other hand, this may be seen to sideline professionalism and, more importantly, streamline the journalistic values out of the "product".

Efforts to incorporate citizen journalism via avenues similar to content mills indicates there may be an emerging ideological fault line between those who see journalistic work as a public service, and those who see it as a commodity. The report to the *Commission on Freedom of the Press* (as cited in Overholser 2006, 18), described the consequences of this sporadic, market-driven approach:

> Too much of the regular output of the press consist of a miscellaneous succession of stories and images which have no relation to the typical lives of people anywhere. The result is a meaningless, flatness, distortion, and perpetuation of misunderstanding.

Usher (2011, 264) crystallises the issue here by questioning the assumption underpinning professional-amateur collaborations: is professionalization of citizens in this context necessarily beneficial? Usher (2011, 265) argues the relationship between legacy media and citizens needs to be scrutinised, because the "proscription" of what citizen journalism is supposed to be may stifle experimentation of a "brand-new form of journalism" that could be a form of "active participation in democracy". This notion that citizen journalism should be cultivated, rather than harvested is an idea that has not been adequately operationalized yet, and the work towards reaching a balance between instilling the purpose of journalism with the accepted 'practice' of journalism, in networked news models, remains to be done.

Downing et al. (2001) and Rodriguez (2001) draw attention to this relatively underexplored area of the literature, namely the study of the citizen in citizen journalism, and calls for more audience research (Downing 2003). It is apparent, from the literature reviewed thus far that there is an ambiguous relationship between what citizens can do for reinventing the business and practice of journalism, and what journalism can do for citizens. At this point, we turn to a proposition made by this researcher, which builds upon the work of Usher (2011), and answers the call for further research made by Downing et al. (2001) and Rodriguez (2001). Drawing an inference from the literature thus far, it is posited that further research is needed into what appears to be

the common denominator for all emerging online networked news models: the citizens; or, more explicitly, what can be interpreted as the collective of citizens that comprises the social infrastructure of these operations. The next section conceptualises this approach by examining the work of several sociologists in the field, and operationalizes the notion of social capital online as infrastructure for networked news models. This article then assesses the potential for this approach to address concerns present in the literature.

Social Capital

Caprini (2000) is often held up as an early utopian of the Internet (McChesney and Pickard 2011, 217) envisaging one-day virtual communities that would lower the cost of collective action, and bring about great change. While research to date is characterised by mixed findings in this respect, Caprini's enthusiasm has inspired much discussion of Internet use and its relationship to the social capital of individuals and communities (Steinfield, Ellison and Lampe 2008; Littau 2009; Hargittai and Hsieh 2012). This section will first explain what is meant by social capital, and then conceptualises it as an infrastructure needed for the success of networked news models. It will hypothesise on the importance of this proposition by reviewing work in the field related to Internet use, website culture and the potential to build social capital online.

Research in social capital is relatively new, gaining widespread attention mainly in the last decade. James Coleman, as cited in Pasek et el. (2009), was one of the first social scientists to popularise the term "social capital" in the 1970s, defining it as a derivative of social theory, "and from the broad idea that social relationships are resources that help people act effectively", essentially defining it as an important, but abstract concept (Dasgupta and Serageldin 1999). Efforts to define and measure social capital increased with the uptake of digital technologies, and gave rise to more applied definitions, such as Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992, 14) "sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition".

While definitions have been reappropriated to take into account virtual settings, the characteristic of social capital as a sum of the benefits gained from relationships, remains constant and stands apart from notions of physical capital, and perhaps less obviously, human capital (Dasgupta and Serageldin 1999). While social capital is hard to measure, it is often agreed

upon that three key outcome variables should be considered: interpersonal trust, civic engagement, and political knowledge.

Social Capital and the Internet

The uptake of digital communication, such as email, spurred increased interest in social capital. The main concern was that the Internet might isolate people from civic society, thereby diminishing their social capital. Early studies found Internet usage to be linked with a decrease in contact with others, and depression. However, more sophisticated longitudinal studies found that Internet use was mostly positive when demographic variables were controlled for, but would stop short of calling it a panacea for social capital building (Aldler and Kwon 2002). These early studies, and a variety of subsequent research tend to categorise Internet use in four broad categories: (1) informational uses, (2) social uses, (3) recreational uses and (4) communicative uses (Coleman 1988; Shah, Kwak and Holbert 2001). The need to differentiate among these categories further, and investigate subsets of usage patterns, has featured consistently in the literature (Ostrom 1999, 175; Shah, Kwak and Holbert 2001; Bimber 2000; Wellman et al. 2001; Zhao 2006). For example, Pasek, More and Romer (2009) point out that while these categories appear to capture distinct usage patterns, they tend to also "gloss over huge distinctions between site types, features and designs [and] ignore user characteristics and the relationship with the medium". In this way, Pasek, More and Romer (2009, 198) highlight an important and new avenue of inquiry in this field, namely exploring the use of social networking sites and online communities as a separate and distinct category of Internet use, and possibly as a means for building social capital.

Social Capital Building

Similar to the renewed interest in social capital that Internet technologies raised, the advent of push-publishing and social networking sites, (both integral in the Web 2.0 transition), attracted attention from those most interested in defining categories of Internet use as a means to further examine how social capital is constructed online. Researchers have noted that through the features of social networking sites (such as creating a profile for yourself, viewing other profiles, sending friend requests and viewing other people's networks), users were able to more efficiently interact with, and maintain, a larger network of acquaintances, which may contribute to levels of social

capital (Pasek, More and Romer 2009, 200). Pasek, More and Romer (2009) take this further by theorising social network sites as site-specific cultures that create a "two-step flow", which "has the potential to produce a virtuous circle that builds social capital and thus civic engagement, political knowledge, and interpersonal trust". In fact, differences found in social capital levels between Facebook and Myspace users indicate there may be some evidence to suggest social network sites have the ability to build social capital (Pasek, More and Romer 2009, 210; Resnick 2001; Donath and Boyd 2004).

This notion of social capital is critical to the success of online communities, and, as an extension, websites that aim to build upon these communities. Bruns (2005) illustrates this point by conceptualising "web communities" as a form of participatory media, dependent on users producing content to keep the community alive. This content production could be interpreted as a function of users' inclination towards civic engagement, and in the case of communicative efforts – interpersonal trust, which are both outcomes and measures of social capital. Given these assertions, for a community to support a networked news model, high levels of social capital are necessary for content production. While financial support of networked models may improve the physical capital (the website and newsroom), and the human capital (through recruitment of experienced journalists and editors), it is still unclear how social capital may be improved, if at all. Without fully understanding social capital, networked news models miss out on a crucial element that is necessary for utilising the human capital available through vast online networks, which is essentially the foundation of all professional-amateur collaborations online.

Research on building social capital online is new due to the difficult nature of first constructing measures for social capital, and second, establishing causal relationships between Internet usage and social capital. Many studies have called for further longitudinal research; however, they concede it is not sound to leverage a causal inference from such data due to causality ambiguities. Only with experimental data is it possible to work towards a causal inference between Internet use and social capital, and even then the control of extraneous variables becomes problematic.

This researcher hypothesises that networked news models could build social capital through a site-specific culture as suggested by Pasek, More and Romer (2009, 210), which could create a two-step flow where the diffusion of knowledge and resources is not linear, but recursive. Theoretically, this would create a self-sustaining online community capable of fostering citizen

journalism that encourages journalistic principles while minimising an industry-down approach.

Experimentation in future research

Currently, little research in the journalism field has been conducted on online audiences and citizen journalists. In particular, there is a lack of longitudinal research due to the nature of technological advancement. Such data would be well suited to address questions of how to use digital media to improve people's life chances (Anderson 2005; Brynin, Anderson and Raban 2007, 142), an ongoing concern of those most interested in social capital (Hargittai and Hsieh 2012). Furthermore, as Kadushin (2004), and Pasek, More and Romer (2009, 202) point out, there is little consensus from the literature addressing social capital due to differing methods in observing and measuring the concept. In addition, there is a lack of research that establishes causal inferences. Pasek, More and Romer (2009, 210) suggest experimental designs, where users' social capital is compared with changing patterns of Internet usage, would be an invaluable contribution to the field. As it stands, cross-sectional studies and case studies, while they provide appreciated insights, can produce misleading findings due to unidentified extraneous variables, and ambiguity surrounding causal relationships.

If the premise is accepted that social capital is fundamental to the functioning of online communities, and, by extension, fundamental to networked news models that seek to build upon the functioning of online communities, then there is a need to further research social capital in online communities. This is an essential step towards better understanding the potentials of new media for journalism in the digital age.

Shirky (2011, 43) proposes that experimentation is crucial in the current news media landscape, and although he was not explicitly referring to the experimental design, his message is still clear:

> Any experiment … designed to provide new models for journalism is going to be an improvement over hiding from the real, especially in a year when, for many papers, the unthinkable future is already in the past.

Shirky (2011, 43) continues on to explain that most experiments will include amateurs and most will probably fail, and no single effort will replace "news

on paper". However, "…over time, the collection of new experiments that do work might give us the journalism we need" (Shirky 2011, 44). In consideration of the literature reviewed, a common denominator to all new media experiments that include amateurs and citizens emerges, which is: the amateurs or citizens themselves. This common denominator – the being and state of the participants – can be conceptualised as social capital and is integral to the notion of networked news models. Based on Pask, More and Romer's (2009) research, it is hypothesised that networked news models could build social capital online through a site-specific culture, which would in turn support the news service through a recursive, two-step flow model of diffusion of information and skill. It is proposed this networked news model approach to building social capital online provides a means to keep core journalism principles alive while encouraging experimentation of citizen journalism at the grassroots level, which is otherwise not necessarily encouraged using an industry-down approach.

It is at this point that the literature under review clearly lends support to experimentation for future research projects. There is a call for longitudinal, if not experimental designs, to establish a causal inference; there is a call for further specifics to be given in the construct of social capital for measurement in varying online settings, and a call for further contextual information surrounding such measurements and settings. There may be some scepticism surrounding experimentation in certain disciplines, however many fields, including those characterised by highly qualitative methods of data generation, advance through causal ideas. While studies in these fields may not directly refer to the experimental terminology, such as internal or external validity, attempts made at defending and generalising findings are usually characteristic of structural features that imply causality, and are at their weakest when highly divergent from experimental structures.

References:

Aldler, P. and S. Kwon. 2002. "Social Capital: Prospects for a new concept." *Academy of Management Review* 27: 17-40.

Anderson, B. 2005. "The Value of Mixed-Method Longitudinal Panel Studies in ICT Research." *Information, Communication & Society* 8 (3): 343-367.

Atton, C. and J.F. Hamilton. 2008. *Alternative journalism*: Sage.

Beckett, Charlie. 2008. *Supermedia: saving journalism so it can save the world*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bell, D. 1977. "Teletext and technology: new networks of knowledge and information in postindustrial society." In *The Winding Passage: Essays and Sociological Journeys, 1960-1980,* edited by D. Bell, 34-65. New York: Basic Books.

Beniger, JR. 1996. "Who shall control cyberspace?" In *Communication and Cyberspace: Social Interaction in an Electronic Environment,* edited by L. Strate, R. Jacobson and SB. Gibson. Cresskill: Hampton.

Benkler, Yochai. 2011. "Giving the Networked Public Sphere time to Develop." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, 225-237. New York: The New Press.

Bimber, B. 2000. "The study of information technology and civic engagement." *Political Communication* 17: 329-333.

Bourdieu, P. 1986. "The forms of capital." In *The handbook of theory and research for sociology of education,* edited by J. G. Richardson. New York: Greenwork Press.

Bourdieu, P. and L. Wacquant. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Briggs, M. 2007. *Journalism 2.0: How to thrive and survive*. College Park: Knight Foundation.

Bruns, A. 2005. *Gatewatching: Collaborative online news production*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Brynin, M., B. Anderson and Y. Raban. 2007. "Introduction." In *Information and Communication Technologies in Society: E-living in a Digital Europe,* edited by B. Anderson, M. Brynin, J. Gershung and Y. Raban. London: Routledge.

Carpini Delli, M. X. 2000. "Gen.com: Youth, civic engagement, and the new information environment." *Political Communication* 17: 341-349.

Castells, M. 1996. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Vol. 1, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell's.

Clark, Jessica and Tracy Van Slyke. 2011. "How Journalists Must Operate In A New Networked Media Environment." In *Will the Last Reporter Please Turn Out the Lights,* edited by R.W. McChesney and V. Pickard. New York: The New Press.

Coleman, James. 1988. "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *The American Journal of Sociology* 94: 95-120.

Dasgupta, Partha and Ismail Serageldin. 1999. *Social Capital A Multifacted Perspective*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Donath, J. S. and D. Boyd. 2004. "Public displays of connection." *BT Technology Journal* 22 (71).

Downing, John. 2003. "Audiences and Readers of Alternative Media: The Absent Lure of the Virtually Unknown." *Media, Culture and Society* 25 (5): 625-645.

Downing, John, Ford Villareal, Tamara, Gil, Geneve, Stein and Laura. 2001. *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. California: Sage.

Ellison, N., C. Steinfield and C Lampe. 2007. "The benefits of Facebook "friends": Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12: 1143-1168.

Facebook. 2011. "Facebook Statistics, Stats & Facts for 2011." Accessed April 1, 2012. http://www.digitalbuzzblog.com/facebook-statistics-stats-facts-2011/.

Frank, Thomas. 2011. "Bright Frenetic Mills." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, 113-118. New York: The New Press.

Gillmor, Dan. 2004. *We the media: grassroots journalism by the people, for the people*. Beijing: O'Reilly.

Gitlin, Todd. 2011. "A Surfeit of Crisis: Circulation, Revenue, Attention, Authority, and Deference." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney; Victor Pickard, 91-102. New York: The New Press.

Habermas, Jurgen. 1991. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*: Mit Press.

Habermas, Jurgen. 2006. "Towards a United States of Europe." Accessed 1 August, 2011. http://www.signandsight.com/features/676.html.

Hargittai, Eszter. 2000. "Open portals or closed gates? Channeling content on the World Wide Web." *Poetics* 27: 233-253.

Hargittai, Eszter and Yuli Patrick Hsieh. 2012. "Digital Inequality." In *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies,* edited by William H. Dutton, 129-150. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, Janine. 2011. "A Better Future for Journalism Requires a Clear-Eyed View of Its Present." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, 202-208. New York: The New Press.

Jarvis, Jeff. 2006. "Networked Journalism." Accessed April 1, 2012. http://www.buzzmachine.com/2006/07/05/networked-journalism/

Jr., William P. Eveland, Krisztine Marton and Mihye Seo. 2004. "Moving beyond "just the facts": The influence of online news on the content and structure of public affairs knowledge." *Communication Research* 31 (1): 82-108.

Kadushin, Charles. 2004. "Too Much Investment in Social Capital?" *Social Networks* 26 (1): 75-90.

Klinenberg, Eric. 2005. "Channeling into the Journalistic Field: Youth Activism and the Media Justice Movement." In *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field,* edited by Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, 174-192. Cambridge:Polity Press.

Kovach, B. and T. Rosenstiel. 2004. *The elements of journalism: What news people should know and the public should expect*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Lessig, L. 1999. *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*. New York: Basic Books.

Levine, P and M. H. Lopez. 2004. *Young people and political campaigning on the Internet. Fact Sheet.* Accessed May 11, 2012. http://www.eric.ed.gov:80/ERIC-Docs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1b/a0/ef.pdf.

Lippmann, Walter. 1995. *Liberty and the News*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Littau, Jeremy 2009. "The Virtual Social Capital of Online Communities: Media use and motivations as predictors of online and offline engagement via six measures of community strength." Doctor of Philosophy, University of Missouri.

Livingstone, S. 2004. "Media literacy and the challenge of new information and communication technologies." *Communication Review* 7: 3-14.

McChesney, Robert and John Nichols. 2011. "Down the News Hole." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, 103-112. New York: The New Press.

McChesney, Robert and Victor Pickard. 2011. *Will the last reporter please turn out the lights: the collapse of journalism and what can be done to fix it*. New York: New Press.

Newkirk, Pamela. 2011. "The Future of Journalism Diversity." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, 249-256. New York: The New Press.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1999. "Social capital: a fad or a fundamental concept?" In *Social Capital A Multifaceted Perspective,* edited by Partha Dasgupta and Ismail Serageldin, 172-214. Washington: The World Bank.

Overholser, Geneva. 2006. *On Behalf of Journalism: a manifesto for change*. Pennsylvania: The annenberg public policy center of the university of Pennsylvania.

Owen, BM. 1999. *The Internet Challenge to Television*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Pasek, Josh, Eian More and Daniel Romer. 2009. "Realizing the Social Internet? Online Social Networking Meets Offline Civic Engagement." *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 6 (3-4): 197-215.

Perlmutter, D. 2007. *Blogwars: The new political battleground*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Preston, Paschal. 2001. *Reshaping Communications: Technology, Information and Social Change*. London: Sage.

Resnick, P. 2001. "Beyond bowling together: Sociotechnical capital." In *HCI in the new millennium,* edited by J. Carroll, 647-672. New York: Addison-Wesley.

Rodriguez, Clemencia. 2001. *Fissures in the Mediascape: An International Study of Citizens' Media*. Cresskill: Hampton Press.

Rodzvilla, J. 2002. *We've got blog: How weblogs are changing our culture*. Cambridge: Perseus Publishing.

Russell, Jason. 2012. "Kony 2012. Accessed 1st of April 2012. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc.

Schudson, Michael. 2002. "THE NEWS MEDIA AS POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (1): 249-269. doi: doi:10.1146/annurev.polisci.5.111201.115816.

Shah, D. V., N. Kwak and R. L. Holbert. 2001. ""Connecting" and "disconnecting" with civic life: Patterns of Internet use and the production of social capital." *Political Communication* 18: 141-162.

Shirky, Clay. 2011. "Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, 38-44. New York: The New Press

Siebert, Fred S., Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm. 1956. *Four Theories of the Press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist Concepts of What the Press Should Be and Do*: University of Illinois Press.

Steinfield, Charles, Nicole Ellison and Cliff Lampe. 2008. "Social capital, self-esteem, and use of online social network sites: A longitudinal analysis." *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* 29: 434-445.

Sutherland-Smith, W. 2002. "weaving the litercy Web: changes in reading from page to screen." *The reading teacher* 55 (7): 662-669.

Usher, Nikki. 2011. "Professional Journalists, Hands Off! Citizen Journalism as Civic Responsibility." In *Will The Last Report Please Turn Out The Lights,* edited by Robert W. McChesney and Victor Pickard, 264-276. New York: The New Press.

Wellman, B., A. Q. Haase, J. Witte and K. Hampton. 2001. "Does the Internet increase, decrease or supplement social capital?" *American Behavioral Scientist* 45 (3): 436-455.

Zhao, S. 2006. "Do Internet users have more social ties? A call for differentiated analyses of Internet use." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 11 (3). Accessed June 12, 2012. http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol11/issue3/zhao.html.

Steve Fox is an Endeavour Australia Cheung Kong Research Fellow, PhD student and sessional academic at the Queensland University of Technology. His research experiments with the social infrastructure behind new information communications technology as a means to potentiate news media's role in self-governing societies. He has published scholarly articles on the topics of social capital in new media ecologies, and maintains a research focus in the Asia-Pacific region, specifically public policy in South Korea.