Social Media's Challenge to Journalistic Norms and Values during a Terror Attack

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Over the past decade, the frequency of terror attacks around the world has increased. In the context of the 22 July 2011 terror attacks in Norway, social media use by citizens, and even victims, became an essential feature of reporting. Social media confronted the legacy media's way of covering crisis events. It raised questions about traditional journalism's ability to handle audience's as, not only news consumers, but also producers. In the present article, we look at the ways in which the professional norms and values of traditional journalism are specifically challenged by social media use in times of terror, using the 22 July 2011 attacks as a case study. We find that Norwegian journalists initially held to their professional roles, and to the classic self-representational principles of journalism, including objectivity, autonomy and imme- diacy. When they integrated social media into their traditional platforms and modes of cover- age, they framed it as a "source" of sorts. As the 22 July 2011 event coverage became more focused on the collective grief felt by the nation, in turn, the traditional journalistic principles of objectivity and autonomy became less relevant, enabling yet more audience participation and social media use in relation to the attack.

KEYWORDS 22 July 2011 terror attacks; journalistic norms and values; social media; terror attacks

Introduction

To most journalists, reporting the big news stories, such as acts of terror, represents the very core of the profession. One important reason for this is that, in truly challenging times, citizens turn to the media for vital, sometimes even life-saving, information, but also for comfort and hope. Complicating this long-standing dynamic is the rise of social media as part of both the everyday and the extraordinary in the wake of the overall digitisation of culture. In this article, we present a case study of terror-event news coverage as particularly relevant to the relationship between journalism and social media, because of the intrinsic link between acts of terror and publicity. Such events also foreground what it means to be a journalist, as these dedicated individuals face pressure from the audience (as well as political decision makers) to provide the most up-to-date and accurate information possible in an environment rife with uncertainty, confusion and outright danger. As yet, little research on journalism and social media has used a terror attack as a case study, though it is widely acknowledged that the impact of digitisation in general has fundamentally changed key journalistic norms and practices (Karlsson 2011a; Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012).

In relation to the 22 July 2011 terror attacks in Norway, we explore the perspectives of two Norwegian news media organisations, a television broadcaster (TV2) and a website (*VG Nett*). This particular terror attack actually occurred near the *VG* offices and directly affected its staff members. Based on our analysis, we frame social media use in a terror context using three phases: (1) disrupted "traditional" professionalism;

(2) managing immediacy and social media; and (3) coping with audience emotions and interactivity. The first phase started when the bomb exploded in the Government Quarter in Oslo Centre (3:24 pm); the second started when traditional journalistic production got up and running on a more stable footing (from 4:15 pm onwards); the third started when the media began to broadcast pictures of the mass murderer (about 12:22 am; TV2's overview of internal timeline) (Dyregrov 2011).

Crisis Coverage and Digitisation

Based upon previous research into the digitisation of journalism and related social media use, it appears that journalistic self-perception is the most vulnerable aspect of traditional practice in the new era. With digitally networked media, everyone can pro- duce and share information on their own terms (Lewis 2012, 838). One could then argue that this brand of citizen journalism, or user-generated news, goes against the very core of the journalistic profession, if one sees that profession as "governed by a distinctive logic—in this case, a professional logic of control over content" (841). Scholars therefore conclude that digitisation challenges journalistic self-perception by requiring journalists to perform multiple functions and develop an ability to adapt rapidly to changing circumstances (Weiss and Joyce 2009). Deuze (2005) states that the most important aspect of the digitisation of the news media relates to journalistic trans- parency and control. Professional authority over the news agenda is eroding due to the growth of interactive and inclusive practices of journalism, and to the public's increasing ability to monitor and even intervene in journalistic processes. The notion of a journalistic profession itself has been challenged by this merging of news consumers with news producers (Deuze 2008a; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre 2013). Barnard (2014) suggests that these changes in recent years have spawned a hybrid, networked journalistic practice that integrates traditional values and practices with the priorities and abilities of the digital and non-professional world. Deuze (2008b) underlines the fact that, in times of profound change, when both structure (such as organisational budget, preferred sources, markets and routines) and subjectivity (such as background, motivation and political views) are in flux, new professional identities emerge. In addition, journalists begin to develop various forms of resistance to the impact of the non-professional on news content (Hermida 2012a; Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012).

Social media has allowed actors other than journalists to engage in news production through the practice of what is often referred to as citizen journalism or user- generated content. Digitisation has also brought about an increased immediacy of content, thanks to a news cycle that has shrunk from a day to a keystroke via websites that must be constantly updated (Rosenberg and Feldman 2008; Schlesinger and Doyle 2015). In relation to crisis reporting, in particular, research has shown that non-professional actors were often faster than journalists at providing information to their peers in the public. In order to be able to compete, professionals have been forced to speed up, which undermines their ability to control both content and audi- ence (Steensen 2016). This drive towards immediacy has especially affected journalistic standards for accuracy and depth (Scott 2005)—a recurrent theme in the literature on crisis reporting in particular (Konow-Lund and Eva-Karin 2015; Nord and Strömbäck 2003; Quarantelli 1989).

In addition, processes of verification have changed in the wake of digitisation, thanks to users' real-time engagement with professional journalistic accounts (Hermida 2012). These new processes of verification derive from the tendency of social media to question the individualistic, top-down ideology of traditional journalism and instead to engage outside networks of expertise and authority, or so-called collective intelligence (cf. Jenkins 2006). For example, Hermida (2010) introduces the concept of "ambient journalism" to capture the ways in which the digital environment is transforming journalism into an "awareness system" aimed at facilitating and regulating the flow of information. Other studies show that the transparency associated with collective intelligence is most often a product of the correction of factual errors, and that the more substantive aspects of news production remain beyond the audience's purview (Chadha and Koliska 2015). According to Singer (2014), the most common roles taken on by these secondary gate-keepers involve assessing the value of the news content and selectively re-disseminating parts of it. It should thus be noted that while user-generated content has been widely acknowledged in the scholarly literature, research suggests that the phenomenon is still rather limited in relation to actual everyday coverage. For example, Karlsson (2011b) concludes that user participation is rapidly increasing but generally with regard to processes that are peripheral rather than central to news journalism. Watson (2012) stresses that traditional media outlets that rely on citizen journalists run the risk of spreading inaccurate material, which can favour rumour over fact. On the other hand, Bennett (2016) draws upon a study of the BBC's coverage of the Mumbai attacks in 2008 and the Norway attacks in 2011 to conclude that social media does not lead to any substantive increase in the use of non-official sources, at least at the BBC. Instead, "organizational news values, newsroom culture, editorial approach and the nature of the news story remain important indicators of how sources will be used regardless of the technological platforms used by news organizations to disseminate the news" (11).

Yet, there are reasons to expect user-generated content to play a particularly important role during times of crisis or acts of terror, when one of traditional journal- ism's goals is to cultivate an emotional relationship between journalists and audience members (Olsson and Riegert 2007). Existing research on citizen participation in the coverage of terror attacks through live photography and video footage shows that people not only expand the overall coverage of an attack but also make that coverage more personal, visual and intimate. During the 2005 London terror attacks, for example, citizen journalism highlighted the resilience and calmness of Londoners (Watson 2012). Through shared acts of witnessing, citizen journalism also plays an important role in the collective memory process that normally follows terror events in particular (Reading 2011). According to an interview-based study with Swedish and Finnish journalists, the use of citizen-created photographs and videos has become routine in crisis reporting, and those journalists' reactions to this development could be categorised in three ways: resistance, resignation and renewal (Andén-Papadopoulos and Pantti 2013).

Method and Empirical Material

The present case study engages two leading national news providers, *VG Nett* and TV2. *VG Nett* was Norway's most-read online news site at the time of the 22 July 2011 terror attacks; TV2 is a long-standing commercial publicservice television channel. Both organisations had offices near the first bomb explosion, and both were evacuated during the attack. As a result, the two newsrooms involved in this study went through the same crisis phases, even though they faced somewhat unique challenges as different media platforms. While TV2 (satellite television) managed to set up its live production relatively quickly, *VG Nett*/*VG*'s building (a newspaper headquarters) was actually damaged by the blast, and journalists had to find a new place to work. *VG* had to pro- duce its news content, including online and moving images, from hotel suites during the night of 22 July, while TV2 Oslo moved for only a couple hours to a hotel, then returned to their offices at 10:40 pm (internal timeline from TV2, accessed August 2011).

The empirical material for this study consists of 17 semi-structured qualitative interviews with nine journalists/editors at TV2 and eight journalists at *VG Nett*, all of whom were involved in the aftermath and coverage of the terror attack. Informants consist of online editors and desk reporters: newspaper reporters ranging from about 22 to 49 years of age (*VG*/*VG Nett*), and desk editors, photographers, reporters, anchors and news editor ranging from 24 to 55 years of age (TV2). The interviews were conducted between July and mid-October 2011. Despite, or maybe because of, their proximity to the trauma of the attacks, most journalists welcomed the opportunity to talk about the event. Several of the journalists had been debriefed in their newsrooms, but others were speaking about the event for the first time. Consequently, the interviews are spontaneous and authentic. Reviewing their quotes for this article some four and a half years later, many of the journalists were surprised by what they had said but approved all of it. The interviews were based on broad and open-ended questions aimed at chronologically revisiting the events via day-by-day narratives (see Sackmann 1991, 301).

Both organisations had impressive institutional legacies on which to draw during this time of duress. The newspaper *VG* was established a short time after World War II. Over the decade preceding the 22 July 2011 terror attacks, the printed newspaper has seen a sharp drop in circulation, from a peak in 2002 of 390,510 to 211,510 in 2011 (Høst 2012). On the other hand, *VG*'s digital platforms (featuring online, mobile, iPad and video content) reveal a huge increase in audience numbers. In fact, *VG Nett* has always been the most popular news website in Norway, with more than 1,278,912 unique users (2014 TSN Gallup). Relatedly, TV2 restructured its two newsrooms by, among other things, establishing a 24/7 news channel in 2007, with offices in the capital city of Oslo and in Bergen (the company headquarters). Since the mid-1990s, how- ever, TV2 had shown a particular interest in “immediacy” and being “live”, so that, for example, managers deliberately encouraged frequent conversations between anchors in the studio and reporters in the field, and almost every programme involved live con- tent (Waldahl, Andersen, and Rønning 2006, 72). By 2011, TV2 had pulled off several years of live production and developed great competence in this regard among its anchors, reporters and producers (Konow-Lund 2013).

Analysis

Phase I: Room for Traditional Journalistic Norms and Values

On 22 July 2011, a white Norwegian man blew up a car with a bomb at the Government Building at 3:25 pm, killing eight people (NOU, Official Norwegian Reports 2012:17). Later that same day, he massacred 69 people, mostly youth, by hunting them down at a Labour Party Youth Camp at Utøya. When the bomb first exploded at the Government Building in Oslo, it was a complete shock on a humid, warm Friday as people were wrapping up work and leaving for the weekend. At the *VG* headquarters, located opposite the Government Building, several of the front windows were blown out by the blast. In order to understand what happened, journalists ran towards the windows, despite the risk. Moments later, those same journalists were made to evacuate the building as the fire alarm howled. The priority was clearly to start working again, and that meant getting to a place where their technology would respond.

The ways in which the two media organisations handled the initial shock of the blast impacted their ability to take advantage of social media in their coverage. At first, social media was primarily used by *VG Nett* journalists to alert their relatives and friends that they were fine. At the same time, social media promptly became a hub for all manner of speculation:

There are so many rumours circulating in Norway. In this context, Norway becomes pretty small. If every fifth person comes along and tells you something, you tend to believe it’s true, right? But then everybody seems to have heard it. And in this particular case, there are any number of such rumours going around. (Senior reporter *VG*, 30 September 2011)

Regardless, journalists concentrated on how to interpret the evidence and under- stand the event, only worrying later about the place of social media in their coverage. One of the first reporters to walk out of the *VG* building into the glass-covered streets tried to help the wounded and record what he saw on his mobile phone (*VG* reporter, 16 September 2011). At that moment, obviously, he was not thinking about social media, one way or the other.

Even during the first stage—chaotic for some journalists, smoother for others— the shared goal was to resume the most professional traditional journalistic practice possible in the context of what was soon determined to be a terrorist attack. *VG Nett* staff members felt this need particularly acutely in the context of what could be characterised as a physical and psychological organisational collapse following their evacuation. While one small group of journalists soon forced its way back to the closed newsroom, most of the rest had to find another physical place to work (Konow-Lund and Eva-Karin 2015). Several technical problems promptly arose as well, including the fact that *VG Nett* access became overloaded and then blocked. Standard professional practice would prove to be very difficult during the first phase of the response following the explosion.

TV2 evacuated its Oslo office. Importantly, its headquarters are situated in Bergen, on the west coast of Norway, and on 22 July 2011, this separation would turn out to be for the best, as desk editors and studio anchors had more distance from the event as they went about the task of analysing the images they were broadcasting. According to one of the TV2 anchors, the implication of a huge breaking news story is that “you forget to look carefully” at the incoming raw material. The focus would be on getting information from the reporters present on location, instead of analysing the incoming moving images as an anchor (reporter, TV2, 30 August 2011). During the 22 July attacks, the anchor recalled how difficult it was for journalists “in the field” to find the time to evaluate sources and film material. At this early stage, then, the TV2 news workers did not consider social media such but rather sought to distinguish between right and wrong information. Despite unexpected difficulties related to the co-ordination of internal and external communication early in the coverage, the story ran in a timely and successful fashion.

At the same time, reporters from both TV2 and *VG* emphasised that the most important thing was to get solid information out to the audience as quickly as possible. What *VG Nett* and TV2 journalists had in common early on was their installation of a reinforced gateway control. Of course, it was also true that resources (time and band- width) were initially quite scarce. According to journalists at *VG Nett*, *VG* newspaper and TV2, their social media activity at first consisted of shutting down irrelevant inqui- ries and requests from others within their own organisations. Several journalists stated that they updated their Facebook accounts with posts directed towards friends and family that said, in effect, "I am fine—do not contact me".

As mentioned, an editorial manager eventually entered the closed-off *VG* building with a group of *VG Nett* journalists, in the interests of getting the best facts out to the audience.

I don't think I've ever felt so strongly as in the moment we turned around and ran back again that this was an important task, getting the correct information out. To the public. There had been pictures circulating on Twitter already, and there were rumours that the *VG* newspaper was going to be a bomb target, and such things. And we understood that that was not the case. So that was also a sort of impetus when it came to getting the correct information out as quickly as possible. (News editor, *VG*, 16 September 2011)

Speculation on social media therefore served to strengthen this journalist's self-perception of himself as a source of the truth about an event. These professional journalists, as always, asked who, where, when and what about the event, then worked as best they could while their institutions grappled with regaining control of practice under incredibly trying circumstances.

Ultimately, the newsrooms fought to satisfy the traditional journalistic criterion of immediacy, which, in this case, meant producing live coverage and being the first to announce events and facts, confirm facts and access the most relevant official sources. The faster they worked, the greater the need for the confirmation of facts, particularly given all of the rumours swirling on social media. During production on a regular day, social media might have been considered an additional platform for both the acquisition and the distribution of information (Konow-Lund 2013), but on 22 July, social media was not thought useful and was even dismissed as the competition. Put differently, this first phase was characterised by a type of "invasion" by social media that journalists tried to counter with good traditional practice. In addition, the chaos and scarcity of resources such as technical staff members in the initial stage of the coverage complicated the possibility of either collaboration or communication with people via social media. Little did any of the reporters know how important those same platforms would be as the attack entered its horrific second phase.

Phase II: The Increasing Challenge of Social Media

In the initial phase, as we have seen, both organisations were taken by surprise, and chaos followed as professionals tried to follow through on the traditional practice they knew. In the second phase, social media becomes a force of its own accord, first for the public and then for the professionals as well. Notably, and horribly, many of the young people at Utøya used Twitter and Facebook to reach out to journalists directly. According to an editor at TV2, "people at Utøya were tweeting. And when you get a message on Twitter … and Facebook … And when you get a tweet, we tweeted back" (editor, Foreign Correspondence Desk, Bergen TV2, 12 September 2011). Given the expansive public use of social media, journalists were more or less forced to begin to account for it—and use it—themselves.

When reporters first found out about the events at Utøya, they tried to learn more about the situation through a traditional approach—they called the young people during the massacre, running the risk that the sound from phones might have exposed certain hiding places. Somewhat surprisingly, the interviews with informants soon after the event in 2011 do not include interviewees' critical reflections about the use of the phone versus the use of social media, which might have been a safer way of contacting people trapped at Utøya.[1]

At this point, the general public also joined in on Facebook and Twitter to express sympathy and sadness. One online reporter expressed frustration with the fact that people who did not even know the wounded or dead would pour out their emotions on social media platforms, adding to the distraction, sheer quantity of material and general commotion:

[Many social media users] needed to tell others how sad they were. Yet I think it was pathetic. I did think that they were sad, but rather that they needed to get attention from others. (Online reporter, *VG Nett*, 26 August 2011)

This quote offers insight, as well, into the misalignment of the traditional values and norms of journalism with the outpouring of public grief (and opinion) on social media. Accuracy and depth of information tended to suffer in the midst of so many claims, cries and exaggerations:

Social media and websites were full of information about up to 20 or 30 casualties. Internally, we had picked up from the police radio that 50 people were dead. In such situations, it's a rule of thumb that the truth can usually be found a good bit below the worst estimate. I was quite sure that this, in a worst-case scenario, would end up at 20–30. And much of the information in the social media was very rumour-based, so I suppose that both me, and the desk editor especially, felt that we needed to hold back on numbers that weren't confirmed. (Anchor, TV2, 30 August 2011)

Social media in the second phase also had the cumulative effect of speeding up the coverage, and several journalists express frustration over being unable to reflect more about what they were so quickly disseminating. There were also many more sources of information, accurate and otherwise, thanks to the participation of the public and social media in this chaotic exchange. One reporter explained that social media and unofficial websites were complicated as both sources and hubs or distributors of information because so much of their content was “very rumour based”.

In sum, as production needs again ramped up after the crisis, the professionals tended to stick with what they knew—traditional journalistic production. At the same time, at a certain point during this second stage, journalists were compelled to account for, and develop a dialogue with, the use of social media. As the audience turned to it, that is, so did the journalists.[2] At TV2, in fact, the anchor referred to social media as an information channel in its own right: “Social media informs us about three to four dead”, she announced, as though “social media” were a coherent, self-governing entity rather than a multifarious aggregation (anchor, editor of foreign news at TV2, Bergen, 30 August 2011). The news organisations hammered out a working relationship with social media as a source, for better or for worse, on the fly, even as things continued to happen and information continued to roll in. It was vividly apparent that much was going on, though less obvious exactly what it was, and both of these conditions were due to the impact of social media as much as anything else.

Phase III: Increased and Creative Use of Social Media

As things started to calm down, and journalists and media houses had an opportunity to think more about *how* to convey the story rather than simply gather and con- firm facts *about* the story, attention turned once again to the potential involvement of the many social media users in the coverage. *VG*, for one, had a long tradition of responsiveness to public reaction to their journalism, and 22 July 2011 was already being characterised as the biggest event on Norwegian soil since World War II. *VG* was so sensitive to public opinion, in fact, that a senior newspaper journalist recalled that the editor-in-chief took phone calls from citizens during the evening and at work and listened carefully to what was said (senior journalist, *VG* newspaper, 23 August 2015). TV2 was also well aware of the strong emotions among their audience members. At some point, for example, the public started to react to the placement of the face of the terrorist on front pages and on websites, and a social media campaign was started to encourage people to turn the newspapers around on the rack when they found them in shops, so as to hide the offending visage (https://www.facebook.com/events/

102235379879024/). Shopkeepers joined in as well. While our *VG* interviewees defended the decision to depict the terrorist with several close-ups, they noted that editors and staff members were very aware of the public's reaction. A senior *VG* journalist noted that what the newspaper considers a "very good story" is not necessarily compatible with the audience's sense of propriety:

They're such good news items. The dilemma is, of course, that the cases coming from the crime section are natural headliners. But then it may be Anders Behring Breivik four days in a row. And people can't stand that … I felt like, "Now! Now! This is the limit! Now people have had all they can take. Now we must be spared the sight of his face". (Senior journalist, *VG* newspaper, 26 August 2011)

This journalist, like his colleagues, emphasises the importance of taking the temperature of the public, including the trends (or campaigns) on social media.

A *VG* online reporter later wondered whether communication with social media users could be improved, perhaps by cultivating transparency of motive in the presentation of the story:

The way we have solved the problem at *VG* online is to simply post a commentary from Torry,[3] for example, where he explains and shows that "we listen to you. This is why we have chosen to do it". It can be that simple. But there may be other ways. But I don't think you should let yourself be controlled by your readers, but show that you've listened to them, and show why you do things. For I think that in this particular case, there have been a lot of question marks. It's been a lot of "Why on earth are they writing about this? Why do they do it?" Because it's not everyone who understands the journalistic reasons for what you're doing. And I think it's important to show people why. (Online reporter, *VG Nett*, 29 September 2011)

This quote demonstrates the unavoidable transparency that comes with a closer interaction with the audience. One of the more important journalistic lessons from the 22 July 2011 coverage at *VG* and *VG Nett* was that the story of this event did not "belong" solely to the professional media. If journalists appeared to claim otherwise, through statement or deed, their audience might even turn to social media to "punish" them—for example, by asking people to turn over the offending newspapers in shops. In the wake of the event, as well, *VG* and *VG Nett* introduced additional editorial meetings at which reporters were allowed to ask more detailed questions about editorial decisions.

TV2 had different experiences in this final stage of coverage, which occupied the three days following the attack. Up to this time, TV2 had used social media primarily to sustain its traditional broadcasting. In an interview, the editor for foreign news stressed that TV2 does not use "people reporting" like CNN, for example, citing, among other things, the challenges involved in verifying audience videos and photos:

We did quote Twitter, we did quote text messages that we had received … We do use such sources. So long as we know who the sender is and … Twitter is also a difficult thing, since you kind of need to know who's behind the messages … We also use Face- book, as long as it's trustworthy. (TV2 editor, Foreign News Desk, 12 September 2011)

When we noted that *VG Nett* has a live-stream feed that is continuously updated and can receive messages from users, the TV2 editor pointed out that such things are always a question of resources. She also emphasised that TV2 recognises social media content as a source that responds well to the desired speed of production these days, but it brings with it both complications and challenges.

In sum, this phase saw these media organisations manage to develop an over- view of the events and begin to draw upon social media to complement their cover- age. TV2 News continued to privilege the traditional journalistic priorities of live coverage, access to good sources and interpretations of the events at hand. *VG Nett* tried to incorporate social media user involvement and saw people's need to express their emotions, as things settled down, as newsworthy in itself. Through a graphic function allowing visitors to hold hands online, *VG Nett* demonstrated in a profound way that its site belonged not merely to journalistic content but also to emotional bonding and recovery for all.

Concluding Remarks

As demonstrated by the analysis, journalists' social media use during and after this terror attack, and the journalistic adaptation that accompanied it, varied according to the phases of the event coverage, the journalistic practices that were applied to that coverage, and the character and characteristics of the news organisations in question. Based on our results, we agree with Bennett (2016) that it is not simply the availability of technological platforms that will determine a journalist's reliance upon social media in connection to terror-event coverage. Rather, as argued herein, social media applies differently at different times and always in a complex relation to the public that is also active upon it.

The journalistic dismissal of social media in the first phase can be viewed as the result of journalists resorting to their traditional journalistic sense of authority regarding the reliability of news-gathering or verification tools. At this point, social media was principally a personal means for journalists (and everyone else) to let others know that they were okay and hard at work. The main focus of these professionals was on gate- keeping their information, as much as possible, for traditional production purposes. The main products generated at this time were live reports shaped to communicate the fact that news organisations were on top of things. During this stage, then, journalists at both *VG* and TV2 concentrated on gathering the most relevant and accurate information and distributing it efficiently. Social media was considered a disruption to what they did best, and individuals at both organisations sought to distance themselves from the rumours that immediately began to appear on it (*VG*, however, did begin to monitor social media at this point).

In the second phase, we saw journalistic authority begin to give in to the pervasive, prompt and massive challenge of social media (see Steensen 2016). One driver here was the embrace of the medium by the young people at Utøya. Journalists started to follow tweets and even to refer to social media as though it were a source in itself. This hasty embrace betrayed the earlier considerations of the complexities of this "source", including both its sweeping multiplicity and its notorious lack of reliability, but the news organisations felt they had no choice, given the amount of activity happening online. Among other things, the information shared or propagated through social media was used by these organisations to respond to public and industry pres- sure for *immediacy* of coverage (see also Karlsson 2011a; Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012).

In the last phase, we witness the rise of a hybrid authority—one shared between journalists and their public social media audience. Rather than primarily framing social media as a "source", journalists sought to use it as a means of involving the audience in the actual news production. *VG Nett*, in particular, began to experiment with user involvement and interactivity, and due to its position as an online news provider, it was readily able to supply an interactive platform aimed at user dialogue. This effort clearly resonates with the fact that crisis reporting, in particular, tends to depart from the ideal of detached journalism and incorporate a greater sensitivity to audience perspectives (Olsson and Riegert 2007). As a consequence of this new technology, in short, the story *no longer belonged to the journalists*—strong and often immediate reactions from the public tended to push coverage in unanticipated directions. In so doing, these digital media landscapes question the primacy of media institutions in the first place, and in doing so pave the way for the development of a truer commonality between professional and public with regard to information about and interpretation of the events of the day (see Couldry 2003). The present case study represents a vivid example of the way in which a hybrid journalistic role in society is arising as a result of the integration of traditional journalistic values and perspectives into the copious activity of a wholly digitised audience (Barnard 2014; Deuze 2008a).

In all, we find that the journalistic approach to social media was very much driven by the public use of social media, to which journalists were quick to adapt, ratherthan by their own norms and standards of professional practice. Admittedly, our findings demonstrate that these Norwegian journalists initially defended their traditional professional roles and tried to enhance their credibility by investing in classically self- representational notions of the news during a time of crisis. Yet they also demonstrate that these same journalists could not escape the influence of an increasingly powerful social media juggernaut. As a result, they came to frame social media as a complement rather than a disruption to their work. Resistance to user-generated material as channelled through social media was strongest in the first two stages of the event coverage, when the focus remained on the verification of facts and the reporting of theunfolding event—that is, on those traditional practices that define the very core of the journalistic profession (Hermida 2012; Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton 2012). For the journalists, these practices were at once familiar and somehow comforting in a time of great stress, and they further soothed the journalists' fear of losing control over both audience and con- text in the face of the onslaught of social media and the accompanying imperative of immediacy.

In the last stage, though, the professional journalistic attitude towards social media and audience participation finally changed, along with the character of the news coverage itself, and as the event response moved into a phase of grief and collective sadness. In this last stage, where there is less focus on reporting the "hard facts", journalists open up for increased audience participation and the potential incorporation of social media use into the coverage.

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NOTES

1. See, for example, http://www.aftenposten.no/norge/--Mediene-satte-oss-i-livsfare- 576028b.html, 18 October 2011.
2. A studio anchor at TV2 News, however, pointed out when reading this article in February 2016, five years after the incident, that if he had turned to social media more quickly at that time, he would have been better informed when he interviewed the Prime Minister. This prompts the question whether social media is even more impor- tant as a journalistic tool during crisis events as compared to everyday work.
3. “Torry” refers to Editor-in-Chief Torry Pedersen at *VG*/*VG Nett*.

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