How do Journalists Build Trust on Twitter? A Comparative Analysis of Local and Regional UK Reporters

PhD

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to examine the prevalence and importance of transparency practices used by local and regional journalists on Twitter. Trust in national media brands is low, and the widespread use of the internet and social media have been the catalyst for underfunding and closures of local and regional media outlets. Twitter offers a platform for journalists to build relationships and trust with their followers, away from the established brands of the newspapers and television stations which employ them. This sequential, mixed-methods study analysed Twitter content from 52 reporters between 20 April-20 July 2017, to find how reporters from differing mediums utilise transparency on Twitter, and why they choose to use these practices.

A content analysis, combined with outcomes from a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA), showed that the medium a reporter works for influences how they tweet and utilise transparency practices on Twitter. Print journalists tend to tweet more, but use transparency less, predominantly using the platform for one-way, non-interactive communication with followers. Conversely, broadcast reporters are more likely to tweet less while utilising a wider variety of interactive, sharing and two-way discussion transparency practices. A snap election called during the data collection period revealed covering events does appear to have an effect on transparency use. Proceeding qualitative interviews indicate reporters in the sample are using transparency practices on Twitter for building trust, but it is not their sole purpose.

Transparency use on Twitter is a reflection of how journalists feel trust can be built between reporters and audience. Print journalists use transparency on Twitter, but remain tied to traditional objective practices by not routinely sharing opinions and personal details. Broadcast reporters are less likely to use objectivity in their Twitter practice, opting for a wider variety of transparency practices, consistently. It is not clear from this study whether this is due to the training journalist's are receiving prior to starting their career, on the job training, or differing traditional norms and practices in print and broadcast newsrooms.

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1- Introduction

Trust is absolutely necessary in order to have a society in which individuals cooperate with one another (Misztal, 1996; Hollis, 1998; Blöbaum, 2014). This does not mean building trust with others is simple. To trust we must overcome the fear of risk, or the fear of being betrayed by those we lay our trust in. Building trust often requires repeated interactions wherein a person's trustworthiness can be tested overtime (Pearson & Raeke, 2000).

The trust between journalism and the audience is an important one to understand as the world deals with increasingly complex problems. Trusting others for information is imperative due to the impracticalities of a single person to gather all information alone. If the audience doesn't trust journalists to provide accurate reports and analysis, the role of the journalist is diminished (Beckett, 2008a; Hardin, 2008a, p.59). Therefore, it is important to understand how journalists can appear more worthy of trust. The best device for creating trust is to establish and support trustworthiness. Without trustworthiness, there is no value in trust (Hardin, 2004; McLeod, 2015; Sztompka, 1999).

Sociologist Ronald Burt put the matter of trust simply when he wrote, "The question is not whether to trust, but whom to trust" (Burt, 2009, p. 47). Social media presents the opportunity for individual journalists to grow trust between the user and themselves, not the brand they work for. This can create a closer, more trusting relationship between the audience and the reporter. Conversely, users can be tempted into only following and trusting information they

agree with, creating an 'echo chamber' effect (Gromping, 2014). The selective nature of Twitter allows the user to choose which content they want to see, meaning they are unlikely to engage with content they disagree with, and are often unlikely to be exposed to opposing views.

Twitter changed the dynamics of journalism. People had more choice of who to trust for information. When this research project began in 2015, trust in the UK media was low. At the time, the annual Ipsos Mori Veracity Index showed 25% of people trusted journalist's to tell the truth. The same survey found 70% of people did not believe journalist's were telling the truth in their reporting (Ipsos Mori, 2020). The same reporters in the UK media were busy reporting on an election, and a looming, polarising Brexit referendum. Politicians and pundits provided differing accounts of NHS savings and the numbers of refugees being allowed into the country. Transparency became a buzzword as politicians and journalists began being asked for sources of information to back these claims.

Meanwhile, Twitter had become synonymous with journalism. At the time, 25% of all verified users were journalists (Kamps, 2015). World events were being reported to the social media platform before traditional platforms. Journalism practices were changing. No longer were reporters confined to reporting only for the brands they worked for, including only what fit into a newspaper or broadcast. Twitter allowed reporters to share the newsmaking process, what information didn't make the full story, provide verification of sources of information, and even interact with users as a person, outside of the professional role.

These practices are in stark comparison to the traditional norms found in journalism prior to social media. Traditional journalism was marked by objectivity, defined as, "... factual and

accurate recording of an event. It reports only the facts, and eliminates comment, interpretation, and speculation by the reporter. The report is neutral between rival views on an issue" (Streckfuss, 1990, p. 974). These practices largely excluded the audiences. The communication between reporter and reader/viewer was one-way. As social media has become an entrenched part of journalism and everyday life, objectivity as a guiding practice of journalism began to fade.

Twitter provided an opportunity for journalists to attempt to build relationships and trust with audiences themselves. It provided a platform for reporters to choose what, and how much they wanted to share with the audience. It provided a new way of performing journalism. With the flexibility to use Twitter feeds for a mix of personal and professional purposes, new working practices evolved. These practices became collectively known as transparency (Craft & Heim, 2009; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001; Barnard, 2014; Elliot, 2009).

How journalists use transparency practices on Twitter have been measured in previous studies. Singer (2005) found that when offered the chance, journalists using blogs to report on 2004 USA elections did use transparency practices such as expressing non-partisan opinion when updating events, and providing links for background and verification of information. However, those observed in the study still had a tendency to 'normalise' their practice to reflect traditional working norms. These norms can vary by industry. Lasorsa et al (2012) found that reporters working for 'elite', or more well-known outlets, were less likely to engage with transparency practices to maintain a 'status quo' with audiences. 'Non-elite' journalists were more likely to use their Twitter feed in non-traditional ways, interacting and sharing with audiences, sharing

personal biases and opinions which may influence the reporting and working with non-journalists.

In both studies, researchers agreed that transparency practices were prevalent amongst reporters on Twitter. However, the practices and rates of use varied widely. This thesis compares the Twitter practice of print and broadcast journalists working in local and regional markets in the UK, to discover if they differ. The traditional working practices of these two groups of journalists are different. Print journalists may work on several stories per day to contribute to the website or the newspaper. Those working in broadcast newsrooms are more likely to work on one story per day because the amount of time to shoot, write and edit video often takes longer than the production of a print story. Twitter provides a platform where production can be similar. The same speed of communication and transparency practices can be used by all reporters on Twitter. This study will attempt to find if print and broadcast journalists use transparency practices similarly on Twitter, despite differing working practices.

Tweets were collected for a three month-period between April-July 2017. During the collection period, a snap election was called for the UK parliament. This unplanned event during the election period provided an opportunity to identify if journalists use transparency differently when reporting on events. The local and regional nature of this study made it difficult to compare all reporters covering similar events at similar rates. As UK elections are a summation of local races, the researcher compared how all journalists in the sample altered their transparency use on Twitter surrounding the election.

While rapid change in journalistic practice is happening due to the widespread use of Twitter, the local and regional news industry in the UK is in decline. Widespread closures can be linked to the use of the internet. From January 2012 to February 2017 it is estimated 136 local newspapers ceased to exist (Mediatique, 2018, pp55). As users moved online and away from newspapers, the lack of revenue from low circulation rates and advertising revenue for local and regional papers has resulted in reduced staffing, closed local offices, and less money available for investment in the substantial innovation that a successful digital future requires (Cairncross, 2019). Of 3000 articles from local papers in West Yorkshire, 76% of articles studied only cited one source. This implies that journalists do not have the time or resources to dedicate to in-depth reporting in their area, leading to a lack of diversity of viewpoints in local coverage (O'Neil & O'Connor, 2008).

As traditional brands have faltered, Twitter has gained normative status within the field (Lasorsa et al., 2012). The social media platform has become a place where the reputations of reporters are made and maintained. Twitter has made room for the individual voice to be heard. If journalists want to have a direct and lasting impact with their followers, Twitter offers a platform to create their own voice away from the traditional media outlet they work for.

Despite the prevalence of local and regional media reporters in the UK, they are under-researched by academics who often focus on national brands of journalist's with large followings (Nielson, 2015, pp2). Local journalism is an area which has been overlooked by academic interrogation (Walker, 2006; Firmstone, 2018; Matthews, 2017). It is often discussed in terms of the economic and practical shortfalls. Moreover, research has shown that national

and local reporters work differently, and often have different working practices and values (Hanusch, 2014), meaning conclusions reached about one do not necessarily represent the other. Market pressures specific to local journalists have created opportunities for new working practices, especially on Twitter (Lavender et al, 2020; Whittington, 2020; O'Neil & O'Connor, 2008). It is for these reasons that this thesis focuses on journalists who work for local and regional outlets.

It has not been identified how local and regional reporters from print and broadcast newsrooms in the UK are utilising transparency to build trust within their Twitter practice. It is this point which raises the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the transparency practices used on Twitter by local and regional print and broadcast journalists in the UK?

- **What are those differences?**

RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?

- **Do they alter how journalists use transparency?**

RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices on Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?

- **What are their motivations when using transparency on Twitter?**

- **Why do they do it?**

1.1 - Positionality of the Researcher

When undertaking any research it is important that the positionality of the researcher is acknowledged. This is due to the fact that the researcher's relationship to the field or past experience may have had an influence on the construction of the project, the construction of the literature review, or the outcomes of the data. In this case, the impacts of Twitter on local and regional newsroom practice were well-known to me. I worked in newsrooms in both the US and UK for 10 years before beginning this thesis.

From the start of my career working in local and regional journalism, Twitter and other social media platforms have been a focus for output. This was nearly always produced alongside the print or broadcast work, not in lieu of. When entering my first full-time position in 2011, I was hired as a multimedia reporter. The job fit the description, with the website and social platforms requiring attention throughout the news creation process. Discussions in the morning included not just what stories we planned to cover for the TV broadcast, but how we could explore that story on social media platforms, mainly Twitter, throughout the day. Reporters were often encouraged to share their progress while creating stories to 'lift the curtain of news creation' (Karlsson, 2011).

Multimedia curation of content became such a normative part of my journalistic process that I would often only create content for the web and social media platforms (instead of for the TV broadcast), especially when on assignment. When following and covering a week-long cycling

race, my only equipment was an Iphone and a laptop, tweeting and creating short videos for the website, rather than hauling heavy and expensive equipment into the field.

New technology and platforms to communicate on meant journalists were finding new ways to communicate. Even then, objectivity was not seen as a norm in the newsroom. Journalists would routinely use their Twitter feeds and other social media accounts to share personal opinions, while also using those same spaces to report news factually. What was considered normative journalism procedures were changing drastically, as reporters were able to readily communicate directly with the audience, while providing details about their opinions about ongoing news.

As a researcher, I am no longer regularly performing those skills or have the influence of the newsroom to generate content. My role is to analyse content as a researcher, rather than create content. However, my practical background allows me to better understand concepts and practical workplace procedures and pressures. This might be criticised as bringing bias into research (Latour, 2005) but this is why the academic process I have undertaken when creating this thesis, has been so critical to its completion. Through the process of reading and understanding research, critical analysis and reflexivity of my previous experience within the project, I have been able to develop a more robust understanding of journalistic practice on Twitter. I also have a better understanding of the motivations reporters have to build trust on social media, and for using transparency in their Twitter practice.

This research project was inspired by my past working experiences. My position within this research project offers personal knowledge and understanding of news production and journalistic identity within local news media. This has provided help, not just in research development, but also in the interpretation of the results (Elliott, 2014).

There are criticisms that journalists performing research about journalism can cloud research choices and interpretation (Paterson & Zoellner, 2010). I would argue that my previous experience in newsrooms allows for greater understanding and depth of interpretation of results. The findings of this thesis would not have been possible for me to accomplish when working as a journalist. They could only be evidenced by utilising a systematic analysis of the data.

This is the only section in the thesis which contains a personal narrative. The rest of the study is written in third person. The outcomes of the study are original. The trends discussed provide a snapshot to measure how social media has changed journalistic practice in the UK at the local and regional level.

2- Changing Journalistic Practice

This study argues that transparency is a normative practice for journalists on Twitter. Several studies analysing journalistic practice support this statement (Singer 2005, Karlsson 2011, Alejandro, 2010 p.13; Noguero, 2013, p.96; Vu, 2014, Lasorsa et al, 2012, Hermida, 2010; Jahng & Littau, 2015). What this means and why this is important to this thesis will be explored throughout **chapters 2-4.** However, transparency is still a relatively new standard within journalistic practice. For decades, journalists operated in an environment without the internet, which meant different journalistic practices and procedures were being followed. New technologies in the newsroom have raised questions about how journalistic work flow will change (Whittington, 2020; Franklin, 2016).

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) described the normative functions of journalism as far back as 1923 (Wilkins & Brennan, 2004, p. 297). Their seven 'Cannons of Journalism' defined the ethical practices guiding working practices of reporters:

- · Impartiality
- · Decency
- · Accuracy
- · Fair play

- · Independence
- · Sincerity
- · Truthfulness

The ASNE suggested that if newspaper journalists followed this working code, they would appear more professional, and as a consequence, public trust and support in journalism would grow. These 'Cannons' were reflective of the technological and scientific understandings of the time. Journalists were told to exhibit "natural and trained powers of observation and reasoning" (Giles, 2001). However, traditional journalism took time. It took time to fact check a story. It took time for editors to review stories and determine placement in newspapers and broadcast news programs (Elliot, 2009). Timeliness was not a main priority. For decades, there was an excess of information that a news organisation had space for. This led to journalists and editors making choices about what made the paper or a broadcast. This was a process known as gatekeeping (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

Shirky (2014) noted that forms of journalism change to take advantage of technological advances. In his review of previous working procedures for journalists, Elliot (2009) noted that the traditional, pre-social media paradigm of news reporting involved five guidelines:

1. Seek external discoverable truth or, if there is no clear single truth, present two opposing sides of the story.
2. Use sources with recognized expertise or authority;

3. Present that material objectively;

4. For consumption by a general mass audience;

5. Through one-way communication.

The widespread use of social media is changing these normative journalistic behaviors, creating difficult choices for journalists, from how to present themselves to audiences away form the brands they work for, to how to handle information that has not been corroborated, especially in an era of modern journalism, where audiences crave and demand information immediately.

How these choices began to change journalistic practice can be found in a longitudinal study beginning in the mid 1990's. The researchers (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014) designed a study to find how news values and work patterns could change or modify over time. Reporters working in local newsrooms in the United States in 1993 were observed and analysed. The researchers studied the same newsrooms in 2013 to see how the guiding principles may have changed over the 20 years between observations. The importance of the study stems from the fact that the two observation periods took place in vastly different journalistic climates. The original analysis was performed in an era of journalism before the widespread use of the internet. The practices being used in the 1993 analysis are considered 'traditional'. (Elliot, 2009). The study ended when the internet was in nearly every home, meaning new working procedures and routines for journalists were likely.

In 1993, the researchers (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014) concluded that journalists in local newsrooms were following three main principles in their reporting:

• Seeking truth and report is as fully as possible

• Minimising harm

• Acting independently

The study was reexamined in the same local newsrooms in 2013 in order to find how the principles had changed over two decades. While seeking truth and minimising harm were still guiding principles being used in newsrooms, acting independently had been replaced with the exact opposite: being transparent (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014).

In an age before social media, acting independently allowed a reporter to have original stories which could not be 'scooped' by the competition (Alejandro, 2010, p.9; Phillips, 2010, p.4). This in turn had journalists keeping information private and acting independently. Journalists often were given a lead or went out to find a story. Today, many stories are received third or fourth hand through social media. Therefore, by the time the reporter is assigned the story, the story already exists in some form, somewhere on social media or the web. The reporter now has to take that into consideration and find some angle to the story that is not yet being reported (Alejandro, 2010, p.9).

Where once journalists argued independence to be a guiding principle in reporting (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014; Wilkins & Brennan, 2004;), reporters should now be striving for transparency (Zelizer, 2004; Patching & Hirst, 2013; Hermida, 2012; Gaber, 2013). This transparency calls for showing the audience how reporting is being done and why. At a time when there is low trust in journalism from the public (see **chapter 4**), the need for transparency from journalists striving to be accurate and truthful in their reporting is of the utmost importance (Singer, 2017). Many practitioners and researchers have suggested that transparency actually improves journalistic credibility, and that users will put greater trust in news media as a result of this shift in

journalistic practice. (Gilmor, 2004; Karlsson, 2011; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001; Lasorsa et al, 2012)

While many other changes in technology before the internet altered how journalists worked, few events in the history of journalism have created such a radical change in normative procedure like the internet, and more specifically social media. New practices are now expected of journalists. How these changes are becoming normalised and the impact web 2.0 is having on the field of journalism, will be explored in the next section and throughout this chapter.

2.1 - A Normative Shift in Practice

The primary values of new media differ from the primary values of traditional media (Ward, 2009). Traditional working practices exhibited by journalists before the onset of social media platforms included: accuracy and verification, pre-publication checks, objectivity and restraint on personal opinion (Ward, 2009; Franklin, 2016; Brautovic et al, 2013; Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001). These practices have changed due to social media platforms becoming such a prevalent force in the everyday life of people in the UK.

As of January 2020, it is estimated that about 66% of the UK's population are active users of social media (Statista, 2020). Every day, people young and old from different backgrounds, races and classes are scrolling, sharing and using social media. The average UK user increased their social media usage from 1 hour 42 minutes to 1 hour 49 minutes in 2020 (Statista, 2020). In turn, this has seen readership of newspapers decrease, as well as viewing numbers on the nightly news. All over the UK, journalists are having to change how they work and where they publish their material, due to a majority of people changing their habits. The financial impacts of this kind of change has been severe for journalism outlets all over the United Kingdom, creating commercial and economic market pressures (Whittington, 2020) This will be explored later in **Chapter 4.1.3**.

As early as 2005, Singer (2005) noted that microblogging can encourage journalists to diverge from their traditional professional roles in a number of ways. At the time, these blogs or microblogs were being used by journalists as an extension to their normal procedures. In 2004, the practice of publishing content to a blog or a website, rather than directly for the newspaper,

or broadcast, was still a new one. Singer's study found journalists did break from journalistic norms and practices of objectivity when they expressed opinions on their blogs, and used hyperlinks to provide users with background and primary sources used in their own reporting, in an attempt to show transparent behaviours. However, despite more journalistic freedom, which was not available before blogs and web 2.0, the political journalists still used a one-way communication model, maintaining their gatekeeping responsibilities of deciding what information should be news, and what should not be. Singer's study showed the beginning of a trend: journalists attempting to reshape their journalistic normative standards and adopt new practices.

The attributes of social media, participation, openness, conversation, community and connectivity, are largely at odds with an antiquated one-way model of communication (Hermida, 2010). This means journalistic practices must change. Ward (2009) points out that the new media value:

- Immediacy

- Interactivity

- Sharing and networking

- Limited editorial checks

- The expression of bias or opinion in an often 'edgy' manner.

These values are almost a complete dichotomy to the traditional normative working practices of objectivity, working independently and fact checking (Elliot, 2009). Studies from several academics analysing the content of journalists' tweets reveal that a significant number go

beyond just the facts (Lasorsa et al, 2012; Sheffer & Schultz 2010; Vis 2013). The findings indicate how journalists are creating new normative routines in an environment where the separation between the personal and private is fragile, and the hierarchical roles of reporter, editor and audience are blurred (Hermida, 2013).

In 2010, Singer noted that journalism is in the process of shifting to a digital media environment, and a networked one. While that may have been true then, it has become obvious that a networked, digital media environment is now the norm. Franklin (2012) noted the major shifts the UK media environment has undergone, marking a change from traditional journalistic practices, to more modern ones.

1. Affordable satellite technology allows for instant transmission of messages by anyone;

2. The Web allows for instant access to information, as well as providing an instant podium and microphone in the virtual, global town-square;

3. Cable and satellite television, along with the Web, has created a 24-hour expectation for information flow, with the destruction of a space- and time-limited news hole; and

4. A lack of hard borders between types of mass communication—news, entertainment, advertising, and opinion—has resulted in a mixed bag of messages that defy easy classification

All of this means journalists must find new ways of working in order to serve their audiences. Traditional journalism's exclusivity of collecting, analysing, verifying and disseminating information is now diversified due to the power of new technologies, including Twitter. Journalists who tweet operate on a neutral platform do not face the same level of oversight, nor

the same necessity to stay on-topic journalistically (Lasorsa et al, 2012, p.24). Traditional journalistic principles of objectivity and gatekeeping are being subverted and reconfigured. How these practices have evolved and changed journalistic practice will be explored in the following sections of this chapter.

2.1.1 - Objectivity to Transparency

Several terms have been used to express the idea of objectivity. Words like 'balance', 'factual', 'impartial', and 'fair' have all been used by researchers to express the idea that journalistic reporting needs to be truthful and comprehensive to be trusted by an audience (Marchi, 2012; Blöbaum, 2014; De Maeyer, 2015; Westerståhl, 1983; Wein, 2005; Glasser, 1984). At the heart of traditional objectivity is the idea that reporters should provide information without bias or opinion.

Objectivity as a journalistic principle found popularity in the USA in the 1920's, at the height of 'yellow journalism.' Practices included publishing stories based on emotionalism and jingoism (far-right conservatism) in the American press. This stemmed from the beginnings of journalism. The commercialism of newspapers, due to printing technology becoming increasingly faster during the 19th century, meant printers (who were often the editors of newspapers) were influential people. As late as the 1880's, editors of newspapers would show open partisanship in their content by only covering rallies of the party they supported, and were even known to ask their reporters 'to go over speeches with sympathetic politicians to improve, in printed form, on the oral presentation' (Schudson, 2001).

Economic growth surrounding the industrial 'revolution' in the late 1800's meant newspaper printers and editors had economic power to fund themselves, with circulation numbers for national newspapers growing in the tens of thousands. In turn, reporters writing news came to focus more on making stories and reporting facts as they happened and less on promoting parties (Schudson, 2001). Journalists began looking at new strategies to guide them in their

reporting, putting more scrutiny into finding facts, rather than relying on opinions (Ward, 2009; Streckfuss, 1990, p. 974).

Partisanship in papers endured (and continues to), but reporters began to enjoy a culture shift away from political parties, to developing their own norms, including clubs, pubs and professional practices (Schudson, 1995). Practices such as interviewing and note taking (rather than recalling from memory) became more commonplace as the news media moved away from a personal perspective of prose, and more towards accuracy and professionalism.

Objectivity was also one of these practices. In a move away from political affiliation and the growing field of public relations, journalists began to understand the 'manipulability of information' in the age of propaganda (Schudson, 1978). In response, newspaper editors formed the first professional journalism association in 1922, the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Discussed at the beginning of this chapter, at the first meeting, the 'Canons of Journalism' was created that included a principle of 'Sincerity, Truthfulness, Accuracy'. It also included 'Impartiality,' explained as, 'News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind' (Pratte, 1995, p.206).

Research into defining what objectivity meant to journalism continued well after 1922. Streckfuss (1990) wote, "A report is objective if, and only if, it is a factual and accurate recording of an event. It reports only the facts, and eliminates comment, interpretation, and speculation by the reporter. The report is neutral between rival views on an issue (Streckfuss, 1990, p. 974)."

However, In his review of objectivity as a practice, Schudson (2001) notes that what is important to understand is not the norms themselves but what caused the norms to be articulated, first by the ASNE. He questions why, if a behavior is already in place, as objectivity was becoming (due to the economic factors discussed above), what additional work does an articulated norm accomplish? He answers this by pointing to the work of two of the founders of sociology, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.

Both did a bulk of their research in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Together they established the field of sociology, taking different perspectives to study trends developing around them. Durkheim would often use positivism to find 'social facts' to explain phenomena about wider society, rather than the actions of individual people (Durkheim, 1982).

He argued that a possible explanation for articulating a norm is to set a group apart from another through 'collective representations.' Often connected with religion, these are beliefs, values, symbols and rituals which set groups apart and become autonomous of the group which they originated from (Durkheim, 1961). Embracing objectivity was a natural step for journalists who were seeking to develop affiliation away from political partisanship and public relations propaganda.. By proclaiming objectivity as a professional normality, reporters set their practices apart from other fields, defining their group from another.

Where Durkheim pursued positivism, collecting and analysing data to understand wider trends about society, Max Weber was interested in the individual: their motivations and rationalisations of their own behaviour (Burke, 1992; Macionis, 2012). Weber believed the need to articulate norms stems from an institutional setting so large, that training cannot take place

informally. To replicate training requires an organisation to define their normal working practices. As journalism sought to define itself as a field, and to train others to have the same ideals, there was a need to outline rules of behaviour. Where education is necessary, the teaching generation benefits from formulating rules, rather than relying on reporters to follow a moral code (Collins, 1986).

In complex organisations, such as a journalism newsroom, there is a need for superiors to control subordinates to keep the operation functioning (Holton & Turner, 2010). When objectivity was decreed as a principle in journalism by the ASNE, rather than a moral choice, subordinates became constrained by rules. Editors were left to make decisions on what was included in the newspaper. Otherwise known as the traditional journalistic practice of gatekeeping.

However, as social media has become an entrenched part of journalism and everyday life, objectivity as a guiding practice of journalism is fading. The control editors once had in enforcing objectivity is lessened, due to platforms like Twitter enabling reporters to tweet as they choose, not in a way which is defined for them. Twitter accounts are personal, not controlled by employers. The data collected in this study will find what transparency practices journalists are exhibiting away from the direct editorial control of their superiors.

As reporters utilise this freedom and 'abandon the false God of objectivity' (Katz, 1996), new working practices have emerged, such as transparency

2.1.2 - A transition to transparency

In 2006, the Annenberg Public Policy Center in Philadelphia, USA published a "manifesto for change" in journalism which noted how objectivity is "less secure in the role of ethical touchstone" while norms such as accountability and transparency are increasing in importance (Overholser, 2006). This meant the decline of objectivity as a procedural norm for journalists, and the rise of something new to adapt to entrenched social media use in the field. What has emerged is the use of transparency practices.

Twitter allows the journalist to not just report information, but also describe their experience, how they feel about it, how it fits into a larger narrative of events and to provide context. It also allows the reporter to share any other aspect of their personality they feel comfortable revealing. The ideals of objectivity appear to stand in direct contradiction to normal operating practices on Twitter. For example, Armstrong (2019) found that due to an 'increasingly murky and digital world,' journalists have an opportunity to move away from objectivity and use platforms like Twitter to address the issue of trust with more transparency and better tools.

Armstrong was not the first researcher to reach this conclusion. O'Neil (2002) believed transparency in reporting would enhance 'checkability (p.57),' allowing others to verify the information that was being reported by the journalist. Prior to that, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) offered the "Rule of Transparency" for journalism, which calls for "embedding in the news reports a sense of how the story came to be and why it was presented as it was" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001, p. 83). These are complete reversals from the traditional, objective reporting practices. Transparency calls for the reporter to provide any information that readers

need to assess the reliability of the news account. In turn, this transparency of information allows for reporters to provide personal commentary on a news story as the reader now has the source material the reporter is basing the commentary on.

Furthermore, objectivity in local reporting is not something audiences typically care about in their viewing and reading habits (Marchi, 2012, p. 256). it is also increasingly difficult to uphold as social media expectations among audiences continue to develop. Journalists are now facing the challenge of being pushed to emulate the traits of sports stars, celebrities, politicians and average citizens when utilising Twitter (Noguera, 2013; Prunka, 2015). These traits include appearing as a more rounded person on social media. This consists of tweeting about more than just the facts of the story, including pictures, raw documents and 'lifting the curtain' of the news gathering process (Lowrey & Anderson, 2005; Karlsson, 2011). Addiotionally, this can include the journalist sharing facts and life events with their Twitter followers to build trust (Karlsson, 2011; Batsell, 2015; Misztal, 1996; Lasorsa et al, 2012).

Traditional objectivity was rooted in the idea that a reporter is a recording instrument who observes and transmits facts. Social media platforms offer journalists choices about how objective they want to be with their audiences, when the platform does not require it. The Twitter content analysis for this thesis tests the choices local and regional reporters made. The results are discussed in **chapter nine.**

Objectivity is not the only traditional journalistic practice which is shifting due to the rise of social media. The emergence of Twitter for breaking news, and the speed at which information moves, is placing further strain on established journalism practices (Hermida, 2012).

Gatekeeping, or the journalistic practice of deciding what information the public does and does not see, is changing due to the rise of individual choice for sharing information on social media. This change in journalistic routine and relationships with followers will be explored in the next section.

2.1.3 - Gatekeeper to Gatewatcher

Transparency in journalism is a broad umbrella, under which journalists can perform several practices to be more open with their readers. Several studies have demonstrated the importance of interacting with users on social media as a form of building trust (Hardin, 2004; Jahng & Littau, 2015; Sterns, 2015; McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014; Noguera, 2014; Gilmor, 2010). That interaction is vitally important in an era where audiences have come to expect news to be reported as soon as it happens. No longer can journalists retreat to a 'fortress newsroom,' (Karlsson, 2011, p. 284) where a story can be fully crafted and then published when the journalist deems it ready for consumption.

Before the rise in relevance of social media, reporters were the holders of information. They (along with editors, producers, etc.) decided what was and was not news. Before the onset of social media, what news was left out of a story or did not fit into print of the newspaper or the time of the broadcast would disappear. Stories, events and information were much harder to be informed of before platforms like Twitter. This is a traditional journalistic practice known as gatekeeping. It afforded power to the press, as qualified journalists were worthy to fill the news hole. But that process is changing and the audiences are sharing in the process (Singer, 2010). Gatekeeping roles eroded as storytelling techniques transformed (Bucy, 2003).

In her 2004 study, Singer (2005) found that despite little to no oversight of the content they were posting, journalists' generally 'normalised' their blog to fit old norms and practices. Even in interactive and participatory format, Singer found that reporters sought to remain gatekeepers. Over a decade after Singer's study, the media landscape has changed. The influence and power

of traditional gatekeepers of content has been eroded with the explosion of content sources. Unless barred by those who run the platform, anyone with a Twitter account can post content. Journalists are no longer trusted purely because they are the ones in control of information.

Traditional media was seen as the voice of authority because of their monopoly on information. Information is no longer scarce. Twitter offered choice in journalistic practice. The platform allows reporters to have a space to be a gatewatcher. Rather than keeping information, this new role encouraged journalists to share information with their followers, more than just fit into their articles or broadcasts. On Twitter, this is called retweeting.

Retweeting is a transparent Twitter practice which takes advantage of the limitless nature of the platform. Where traditional practices encouraged gatekeeping, deciding what the audience sees and doesn't due to the limited space available in a newspaper or time in a broadcast, gatewatching encourages the sharing of any and all information pertinent to followers. It is an approach which largely focuses on the republishing, publicising, conceptualization and curation of existing material rather than the development of substantial new journalistic content (Bruns, 2011, p. 123; Alejandro, 2010, p.13).

On Twitter, reporters are given the space to build a following for their content, away from the influence of the outlet they work for. This shifts the control of information from large news brands to individual reporters. The impacts of this shift are explored in the next section

2.1.4 - Institutional Control to Individual Branding

In traditional media environments, reporters have little opportunity for building any personal name recognition. In newspapers, small bylines and potential pictures next to stories were all that differentiates one reporter's work from another. In broadcast, building recognition may be easier with video and audio, but reporters are given limited time on screen. Twitter changed this by allowing and encouraging users to cultivate an often public-facing persona. This is organised around profile photos, status updates, and content shared, among other things (Molyneux et al, 2017). In this environment, individual journalists have the opportunity to become their own 'brand', away from the established 'brand' of their employer (Molyneux et al 2015; Picard 2014). Explained further in **chapter 4.1.3**, as newsrooms are downsized and budgets are cut, newsmen and newswomen are increasingly encouraged to develop a personal brand on social media (Whittington, 2020).

Where once journalists had very little control over how audiences viewed them, Twitter offers choices for reporters to define and build a relationship with their audience through the content they choose to share. Most of these interactions may be relatively brief or inconsequential (especially on social media), but their total effect is one that contributes to shaping an individual's brand, or identity (Molyneux et al, 2017). The process of developing this identity online is known as branding. It consists of journalists making decisions about how they want to be viewed by users on Twitter.

Early definitions of branding focus on the way producers try to sell products as unique and distinctive (Lair et al, 2005; Murphy, 1987). These same principles are used when journalists use social media. Branding is made up of several practices which take advantage of the open nature of social media platforms. Recent studies highlight just how prevalent branding practices by reporters have become. A 2017 content analysis of Twitter accounts of nearly 400 USA based journalists suggests that branding is now a common practice among journalists. In all, 95% of journalists' Twitter profiles contained elements of branding measured in this study, and a majority of their tweets (58%) also contained elements of branding (Molyneux et al, 2017).

Branding is part of a shift in professional roles and norms in the journalism industry caused by the onset of social media. Due to the interactive nature of the platform, journalists have been challenged to be more transparent in their reporting, more interactive with users and more open to mixing their professional and personal lives on Twitter (Hedman, 2016; Lee, 2015; Olausson, 2016). As transparency has become a normative standard for reporters, audiences have been allowed to see efforts made by journalists they follow to appear more authentic and trustworthy (Hellmueller et al, 2012; Phillips, 2010; Revers, 2014). Such efforts at transparency share similar motives and forms with branding appeals.

A 2015 article from Columbia Journalism review simply states that "personal branding is key to building a career in journalism" (Bech Sillesen, 2015). Research from academics and researchers supports this statement. The practical ways personal branding is attempted by reporters on Twitter was reviewed in a 2017 study of 40 Dutch and Flemish reporters. In the content analysis

of their Twitter output, the researchers looked for multiple markers of how journalists were using their tweets, including (Brems et al, 2017):

- Standalone Tweets
- Interactive tweets - '@'
- Retweets

- Who they were interacting with

- Function of Tweets
  - Sharing news
  - Live reporting
  - Opinion, critique, opinion
  - Arguing, debating
  - Sharing personal information
  - Reflecting on journalistic practice

The researchers set out to find how the observed journalists present themselves on Twitter and the dilemmas they faced when deciding on how to do so. They found the majority of tweets to be interactive with other users, rather than one-way communication reporting news. While this communication was mostly with the public, a quarter of the tweets analysed were communicating with other journalists. Of the 6000 tweets, far more of them were sharing news from outside sources, rather than reporting original information, while tweets arguing with other users and giving opinions made up a majority (Brems et al, 2017).

This implies the brands reporters are attempting to craft on Twitter are not based on primarily exhibiting objectivity, but interactivity and transparency. The study interviewed a selection of the journalists and found that how journalists build their brand is based on choices they have to make about their content, such as:

- Factual or opinionated?

- Professional or personal?

- Explicit or implicit self-promotion?

What choices journalists make about these questions will directly influence how they are perceived by users and followers. The results show that reporters are striving for an ideal mix of professional and relatable content. By personalising content and attempting to show creativity on social media, a journalist can deliver unique insights in matters that satisfy the potential customer and make them come back for more (Brems et al, 2017). In turn, this may encourage the user to trust the content they see from the reporter over time. **Chapter 8.2.2** discusses interview responses from local and regional journalists for this thesis about personal branding.

As shown throughout this chapter, transparency has many uses and characteristics in journalism. **Chapter three** will examine how transparency is shown on Twitter by reporters and explore the effectiveness of these actions.

3 - What is transparency?

The simple question of 'what is transparency?' has several answers. Transparency research in different fields has shown definitions and practices differ. In international relations literature, Bishop (2004) notes a difference in 'internal' transparency that aids monitoring for potential transgressions, and 'external' transparency that includes the public in decision making processes. While performing research into corporate financing Tapscott and Ticoll (2003) found, "Transparency is the accessibility of information to stakeholders of institutions, regarding matters that affect their interests" (p. 22). This implies that there are those who have information and those who rely on it in order to make decisions.

In a review of journalistic studies, transparency was summarised as openness (Vos & Craft, 2017). This openness is broadly characterised as honesty and above-board dealings. In practice, reporters can be transparent about both their 'internal' and 'external' practices. Being open and explicit about 'internal' processes, methods, limitations, and assumptions allows audiences to monitor, check and criticise reporters in a way which can lead to more truth in news stories (Karlsson 2011; Singer 2007; Deuze 2005). 'External' transparency is possible through two-way communication between journalist and audience, a practice made more accessible with social media.

The effects of transparency and how it is practiced have been prominent themes in journalism research. Defining what transparency is often returns to an open, two-way relationship between reporter and audience. Transparency is described as journalists being: "open about relationships and goals" (Herrmann 2001), "open to criticism" (Mopsik 2012), "telling

consumers who we are, what we aim to do and how we operate" (Sill 2011), and letting users "inside the news gathering, production and decision-making process" (Karlsson, 2011). All of these require reporters to actively disclose information. This is a proactive approach, where reporters explain their motivation and processes, rather than simply showing the final product (Craft & Heim 2009; Karlsson 2010). More specifically, it requires disclosing additional information to the news content. Social media has provided a space for that to happen.

While social media has made the process of disclosure much easier, transparency and the practices involved have been studied for over 20 years. One of the earliest and most prominent studies to discuss the role transparency can play in journalism noted the 'rule of transparency'. The rule centred around the idea of exposing the news process to audiences by including how the story was created and why it was crafted in that way within the news itself (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). This rule was created before the internet and social media became prominent aspects of reporters' work patterns. The influence of embedding motivations and processes in journalistic transparency can be seen in later studies, including Singer (2007), who defined transparency as an active, disclosure-oriented extension of accountability. This means journalistic transparency should cover "truthful disclosure before and during an act as well as after it has been taken" (p. 84).

These two definitions have been highlighted because they encourage not just the disclosure of journalistic performance (i.e identifying sources, correcting errors, declaring conflicts of interest), but also about motives. Research suggests that as audiences demand more transparency, it will relate more to intentions than facts (Craft & Heim, 2009). This requires a

reporter to provide an account of covering a story, rather than just making information available (Karlsson, 2011; Vis, 2012, p.44; McBride and Rosenstiel, 2014, p.137; Song & Lee, 2015, p. 434; Phillips, 2010, p.4).

Attempts have been made by journalism outlets to be more transparent in their reporting. One research project installed a live chat function into a Swedish newspaper's website so that readers could live chat with journalists in the newsroom, as long as it was staffed (Vinter, 2011). This was previously not available before the study. The move was popular, utilised daily by the audience. The editor stated this kind of transparency took the guesswork out of what the audience wanted because they had the capacity to simply ask them (Vinter, 2011).

'Curious City', a radio news experiment at WBEZ in Chicago, highlights further changes to journalistic practice. The platform lets the public assign journalists' stories and reporters show their work throughout the process, even inviting community members along to interview sources (Sterns, 2015).

These examples show that journalists are pursuing opportunities to change journalistic practices to adjust to a new era of journalism. Smith (2005) characterized transparency as the opposite of fortress journalism, in which a journalist's wall themselves off from the communities they cover. This transparency is made up of actions which include:

- Disclosure of methods used to gather and verify information

- Disclosure of editorial choices and why certain stories are pursued and others are not. This may also include what might otherwise be hidden, such as motives or reasoning behind decisions made in pursuit of the story.

Increasingly, transparency is becoming a personal choice for journalists. Previous examples show that outlets have instituted transparent practices, but Twitter's normative status within the field (Lasorsa et al., 2011) has given journalists the opportunity to communicate directly with their audiences. Twitter presented an opportunity for change. The social media platform has become a place where the reputations of reporters are made and maintained. With the large number of journalists and audiences on Twitter, reporters can build trusted, meaningful reputations - or not - through their tweets and interactions (Barnard, 2014).

The goal of this thesis is to find to what extent local and regional journalists in the UK are using transparent practices on Twitter, and to examine if the use of these transparency habits is to build trust with Twitter users. The research discussed in the remainder of **chapter three** provides a framework for the quantitative and qualitative studies of this thesis.

3.1 - Transparency and trust

Throughout journalism literature, researchers have asserted how journalism can benefit from incorporating transparency into their practice. Hayes et al (2007) believed that reporters who used transparency practices could create mutual trust with audiences. This transparency can be shown in two forms: personal disclosure and evidentiary support in reporting. Further, Singer (2010) explained that transparency can be understood as a more honest form of journalism than what has come before it. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) proposed that transparency can help citizens "to identify which journalist to trust" (p. 91), because "the more honest the journalist is with the audience about what he or she knows and doesn't know, the more trustworthy the journalist is" (p. 100).

Transparency in journalism has been posited as a solution to problems facing the entire industry, such as a lack of trust and credibility in the news media (Pew, 2012; Kovach & Rosentstiel, 2007). This is covered further in **chapter 4.** Academics have theorised about the effectiveness of these techniques, claiming that these actions *should* lead to increased trust between the two parties.

However, there is only limited evidence that being a more open and transparent user of Twitter will lead to enhanced credibility, accountability and trust. In their quantitative study of Twitter, Meier and Reimer (2011) found that transparency has an effect on trust in some aspects but not as a basic principle. A more recent study by Van der Wurff and Schönbach (2013) implies that the audiences like transparency in reporting, but the results were self-reported by the subjects and did not measure the actual effects of transparency use.

Karlsson et al (2014) did attempt to study the actual effects of the various practices of disclosure transparency. They found acts such as timestamps, explained angles of a story, and corrections have almost no effect on credibility. Therefore, they conclude that transparency cannot be considered an 'enhancer of journalistic credibility compared to traditional journalistic norms. Transparency will neither revolutionize nor reform journalism's credibility in short or middle-long terms' (p. 10). The researchers were not the first to note that transparency has flaws and may not lead directly to a trusting relationship.

 For example, Wasserman (2010) found that while journalistic processes should be publicised, especially when they are flawed, the process does not need to be done publicly. The study claims journalists should be using transparent acts such as disclosing how they are completing their work, but possibly not in real time as it may detract from the journalistic performance itself. Additionally, reporters can bombard users with so much information that it becomes nearly impossible to separate the "signal" from the "noise" (Craft & Heim, 2009). This tactic has been employed by several institutions who are hoping to hide sensitive information. A legal team may produce a large amount of documents in order to hide a piece of important evidence (Balkin, 1999). It is also popular when hiding damaging information from the press, without withholding information. An organisation will release a large volume of information, inclusive of damaging news to the press to avoid media scrutiny. As Florini (1999) explained: "In a cynical view, if you really want to hide information, the best thing to do is to bury it in a flood of data" (p. 9).

Not only has the effectiveness of transparency been questioned, it has also been shown that any trust gained by journalists can be negated through self-interest. Models of building trust from Pettit (1995) and Maister et al (2000), show that despite trying to build trust with followers, this can be quickly negated by the reporter not considering their audience when it comes to disclosing information and story selection. Therefore, if trust gained can be lost with simple (in)actions, journalists may feel the extra effort of transparent actions may not be worth the time.

Conversely, the interconnected nature of social media gives reporters the *opportunity to earn* trust and credibility individually, rather than expect or demand it. This can be accomplished using transparent practices, which were not feasible before the onset of web 2.0 (Hayes et al, 2007). Even if perfect transparency is unattainable, it is reasonable to consider practices that strive for it (Craft & Heim, 2009). Transparency has become a journalistic norm, not least because it is believed to promote credibility and accountability (Hedman, 2016). Transparency serves as protection for journalists when the truth of their content is doubted, much like Tuchman (1972) wrote of the role objectivity played for journalists in a bygone era.

As journalism moves away from objectivity, reporters must find new ways of verifying the truth. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) recommended transparency, "Most of the limitations journalists face in trying to move from accuracy to truth are addressed, if not overcome, by being honest about the nature of their knowledge, why they trust it, and what efforts they make to learn more" (p. 92).

Coleman et al (2012) showed that audiences expect more explanations and contextualization of issues and processes in order to trust journalism they consume. Audiences want to know more about the people behind a story, learn about the journalistic process, and also see journalists' track record (Jahng & Littau, 2015). Transparency is one way citizens can "identify which journalist to trust" (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007, p. 91).

3.2 - Twitter and Transparency

Transparency is a practice made for the internet (Vos & Craft, 2017; Palser, 2002). More specifically, social media platforms. The internet created a limitless space where reporters could create content separate from what they created for their employer. For example, Singer (2005) noted how this extra space for reporters provided opportunities to be honest and accountable to their audiences. During 2004 elections in the USA, reporters used blogs as a space to deviate from practices of objectivity by providing links for evidence and expressing personal opinions about the voting.

Singer's (2005) study illustrates how journalists began using transparency practices on blogs, which were separate to objectivity being used in traditional media. Stratman (2011) later found that journalists were becoming more inclined to use social media platforms as a valuable part of the journalistic process. These studies mark an important shift in attitudes towards evolving journalistic practice online. A yearly study of UK journalistic attitudes and practice from Muck Rack shows that Twitter is considered the most valued social media platform by 85% of reporters polled. Perhaps more significant is that despite already being the most valued platform, 38% of those polled said they planned to use Twitter even more than they already do in the next year (Muck Rack, 2020).

In 2011, Lasora et al (2011) found that Twitter was gaining a normative status within the field, where journalists were creating and maintaining relationships with the audience away from their employer. The number of journalists and audience members on the platform allowed reporters to build notoriety, reputation and potentially trust through their actions and

interactions with their followers. Later research from Barnard (2014) concurs with the Lasorsa group, revealing that a clear majority of journalists on Twitter found the medium to be a great asset. Reasons cited included its speed, conciseness, interactivity, and potential for engagement, made possible by its ubiquity and popularity in the field.

Due to Twitter's widespread use, abstention from the platform may have a negative impact on individual journalists and their institutions (Lasorsa et al, 2011). The reporters not using Twitter in the current climate of journalism appear to be a minority. One study found that journalists and members of the media make up nearly 25% of all verified Twitter users, the most of any group on the platform (Kamps, 2015). Many of the reporters using Twitter are expressing opinions more freely, a behaviour which directly contradicts the traditional journalistic norm of objectivity (Noguera, 2013). Sterns (2015) argues that this shift to transparency as a guiding principle, moving away from the traditional practices of objectivity is pertinent to the changing journalistic process. Reporters must find ways to show their information can be trusted, despite the noise of information users are faced with every time they log on. Twitter offers reporters a choice on how they want to do this.

This is supported by the sociological theory of 'collective representations' by Emile Durkheim. Discussed in **chapter 2.1.1,** the theory of 'collective representations' was part of this research, detailing how groups may choose to articulate a normative procedure in order to set themselves apart from other groups (Durkheim, 1912 ; Pickering, 2000). Written when discussing religious identity in the early 1900's, the theory can apply to journalism, and the use of transparency. For a value to be an institutional norm it must be articulated as a norm. There

has been evidence of transparency being declared an institutional norm. For example, in 2014, the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), included the phrase, 'Be accountable and transparent' in their official code of ethics (SPJ, 2014). While not directly tied to being transparent on social media platforms, transparency has been shown to be a part of the working practices of journalists. As Twitter has become a part of normative practice for reporters, the use of transparency practices have become a normative practice on the social media platform.

3.3 - How is Transparency practiced on Twitter?

This chapter began by stating that transparency is synonymous with openness (Vos & Craft, 2017). This openness is often expressed through 'disclosure transparency' and 'participatory transparency' (Karlsson, 2010). Disclosure transparency is often displayed by explaining and showing how news is made, while participatory transparency relies on interaction between reporters and users.

As Twitter has become an entrenched part of the working practices of journalists, sharing information outside of traditional platforms has become easier. Studies show journalists routinely break from traditional working practices in order to display transparency to their followers and other users. Twitter has been used as a platform for live coverage of events (Alejandro, 2010; Vis, 2012), for audience participation (dialog, crowdsourcing, interaction, etc.) (Lasorsa, et al, 2012 Phillips, 2012), and branding (Bruns, 2012; Greer & Ferguson, 2011). The information reporters choose to reveal about their lives, their news making processes and how they engage with audiences are all factors in how journalists will relate to their followers. The more transparency practices reporters display on Twitter, the more accountable, trustworthy and credible they may be seen by audiences (Hedman, 2016).

Empirical studies have measured the transparency practices reporters are using on the platform. Hellmueller et al (2013) reviewed disclosure and participatory practices such as: providing evidence of how stories are made, sharing where facts originated and communicating with users in two-way communication. Jahng and Littau (2015) found that journalists who attempt to interact and display personal traits outside of their professional roles as reporters,

led to increased credibility amongst users. Throughout journalism literature, academics and researchers (Beckett, 2008a; Beckett, 2008b; Harwood, 2012; Alejandro, 2010; Sterns, 2015; McBride and Rosenstiel, 2014; Gilmor, 2010; Karlsson, 2011) have identified practices reporters are using on Twitter to appear more genuine and reliable in relationships with users, including:

• Inviting users to contribute story ideas

• Allowing users view story meetings (through Periscope) and contribute to ideas

journalists are working on

• Posting updates to stories as they unfold

• Allowing users to contribute their ideas and responding to those ideas individually or asa group through a tweet

• Naming the sources used in the story

• Publishing all raw data used within a story

• Follow up with audiences after publication to gather their opinions and to answer

questions

• Sharing personal experiences through tweets about life outside of being a journalist

All of these practices put an emphasis on the reporter to actively disclose not just professional information about the process of creating content and verifying information, but connecting

and communicating with users on a personal level. One empirical study in particular identified and analysed seven transparency behaviours journalists use on Twitter (Lasorsa et al, 2012). These practices were broken down into three categories which illustrate the decisions reporters make about their transparency use on Twitter: non-partisanship, gatekeeping and accountability. When tweeting, journalists on Twitter need to choose how comfortable they feel breaking from traditional objectivity, sharing information they did not report themselves and providing evidence and documentation for their reporting. These decisions included the utilising the following transparent practices:

- Major opining - *Tweets which were judged as primarily conveying opinion*

- Minor opining - *Tweets which Primarily conveyed information (with limited opinion)*

- Retweeting - *Tweet consisting of the verbatim posting of another tweeter's message, plus the identification of the original source.*

- Job Talking - *Tweets which are primarily information about how a journalist performs their job*

- Discussing - *Representing an exchange shared between journalist and follower but in a public fashion.*

- Personalising - *Tweets about the journalist's personal life*

- Linking - *Tweets containing an external link. A hyperlink to another website for source material*

Collectively, the practices show a vast range of ways in which a journalist can utilise

transparency on Twitter. Linking, minor opining and personalising were the three most

prevalent transparent actions performed in the Lasorsa et al (2012) study. Tweets expressing

any type of opinions (Major and minor opining) made up 43% of the sample. Nearly 16% were

primarily opinion tweets. Singer (2005) found similar results in a much earlier study, recording

61% of the blog posts in her study contained expressions of personal opinion. This is significant

for several reasons:

1. Reporters are breaking from traditional norms of objectivity on Twitter, while
   encompassing new journalistic work practices

2. The prevalence of opinion suggests reporters are attempting to appear as a more-well
   rounded person in order to connect with their audiences.

The research for this thesis utilises the transparency practices observed by the Lasorsa group in

the quantitative analysis. These variables are being used because they provide a proven range

of variables to study transparency use among reporters. By measuring the prevalence of the

same variables, the researcher for this thesis will be able to compare the results of the Lasorsa

study to the quantitative analysis to measure how transparency use among reporters has

changed, or remained constant, over the past decade.

3.4 - Not all transparency is created equal

-Research suggests Twitter users may be following particular journalists on Twitter, not because the reporter is doing an effective job of building trust and using transparency, but due to preferential attachment. This occurs when news outlets (and the journalists connected to them) with larger audiences get more followers because more people, and Twitter users know who they are (Tremayne et al., 2006).

For example, Twitter users will often search for those they want to follow. The 'rich get richer' when a Twitter user types in a known news outlet (ex. BBC, The Guardian). When searched, the reporters who have something about these well-known brands in their bio will also appear in that search. However, there will be several local journalists covering similar news which will not have the chance to be seen by the user.

The issue this raises is that journalists working for larger outlets may have different motivations for their Twitter use, as compared to reporters working for a local or regional newspaper. In what set the study apart from others, Lasorsa et al (2012) compared 'elite' media output to 'non-elite.' The elite designation was assigned to journalists working for larger, more well-known outlets, while non-elite referred to those working for smaller media brands. This was done in order to find differences between the two groups which may indicate how Twitter is changing professional norms and practices. The reason for this was that those working for more well-known organisations would be less apt to be transparent on Twitter and to take less advantage to change work routines because they would collect followers just for the notoriety of the brand they worked for. Journalists working for more elite news organisations might

believe that they have relatively more vested in the existing system as opposed to their counterparts working for lesser known, non-elite organisations. Lasora et al (2012) wrote:

"Those working for a local newspaper or the news department of a local TV channel might have to be more active and interesting on Twitter to obtain and keep followers. Part of that work might involve using Twitter in ways that other non-journalist users tend to use Twitter, and to explore other innovative ways to attract an audience."

The quantitative study found 'non-elite' journalists generally engaged in the activities indicative of (1) opining, (2) discussing, (3) personalising and (4) providing accountability and transparency through links more than those working for 'elite' news outlets. The main variation in the comparison was in the amounts of opinion sharing (opining). The more 'elite' journalists were less willing to deviate from traditional norms and practices than the 'non elite journalists,' who often tweeted more akin to non-journalists, using Twitter for opinions and personal communication, as well as reporting. Journalists from elite outlets were also found to be less likely to:

- Enter discussions with Twitter users

- Tweet about personal life

- Link to external websites for verification of material reported

The researchers wrote that reporters who work for more recognised titles and would benefit from a larger following are less vested in changing journalistic norms. Due to profiting from the notoriety, they may be the least willing or able to change (Lasorsa et al, 2012). The data showed that journalists working for smaller outlets appear to be adapting to these new practices

quicker than their national counterparts (Lasorsa et al, 2012). The study highlights that

reporters working in different environments may have different working routines and practices.

This theory of differing work environments causing variance in tweeting behaviour will be

tested in this study by comparing print and broadcast reporters on Twitter. It is not claimed that

one is 'elite' and one is 'non-elite'. Rather they will be compared to find how they are using

transparency on Twitter. These results are discussed in **chapter 9-9.2.**

4 - How a Journalist can Build Trust

Hardin (1996) simplified the abstract idea of how trust is built into a mathematical equation: A+B=X. A trusts B to do X. Everytime a person (B) fulfills the expectations (X) of another (A), small levels of trust are built between the two parties. Trust is a basic, human interpersonal skill, built through repeated interactions wherein a person's trustworthiness can be tested overtime (Pearson & Raeke, 2000). Hardin (1996) argues the complexity of trust can be simplified when B helps A to secure that trustworthy relationship. The best device for creating trust is to establish and support trustworthiness. Without trustworthiness, there is no value in trust (Hardin, 2004; McLeod, 2015; Sztompka, 1999).

Establishing and supporting trustworthiness with online audiences has been prevalent in journalist research over the last decade. This research differs from an era before social media. One study found many newspaper reporters in the late 1990's were 'horrified at the idea that readers would send them an email about a story they wrote, and even expect an answer' (Riley et al (1998). With the onset of web 2.0 and social media, the methods by which the individual journalist builds trust with an audience changed, due to the potential for interaction between the two (Alejandro, 2010).

Trustworthiness is a characteristic or behavioural trait of a person who wishes to be trusted and something to aim for to increase trust (Torsello, 2008). Through extensive research into the interpersonal trust building process, Pettit (1995) wrote about levels of trust which can be

achieved by one seeking trust, depending on how open, honest and transparent they are about their actions:

Basic trust

• They are reliable/keep promises

• They are good at what they do

- Once basic trust has been achieved, the next level of consideration for the trustor (doing the trusting) is whether the other party will treat you well. Do they have your well-being in mind when they make decisions and conduct their affairs?

Active trust

• They behave responsibly

• They are open and transparent about what they do

- Functional level of a relationship. The parties trust each other because the trustor understands the motivations and actions of the trustee

Interactive trust

• They do what they does with the best of intentions

• They share my values

- This is largely based on previous and repeated interactions. Whether one is able to achieve interactive trust with another is often based on whether and how often people vouch for the one seeking trust and whether actions match up with words. Simply, it is treating another with honesty, fair treatment and the avoidance of hypocrisy.

Putting this in the context of journalism, it becomes possible to map out how a trusting relationship could grow on Twitter between a journalist and a follower. Basic trust can be formed when the follower wants information and the journalist provides it. The journalist provides reliable and important news to the user in a way which makes sense to them. This moves to active trust when the journalist begins to not just perform consistently, but also share more about how and why they cover stories they are covering. This allows the follower to understand the motivations and actions of the reporter. This moves to interactive trust, where the two may communicate and share ideas and comments, when the two have shared values. The follower feels that the journalist is operating in their best interest and wants to contribute to the work of the reporter. If the follower believes the journalist is operating in their own self-interest, this can completely undermine previous efforts to be trustworthy.

Also understanding the importance of avoiding self interest, Maister et al (2000) attempted to simplify this trust building process into a simple mathematical problem

Credibility + Reliability + Intimacy / Self-interest

Credibility refers to the person appearing to have a working knowledge of the topic being discussed. Reliability is defined by the researchers as the person doing what they say they will. Intimacy is achieved when the person receiving the trust appears to understand the trustor and their needs. This is divided, and can completely negate the actions added before, by a journalist

appearing to or deliberately acting in their own self interest. When this happens, or appears to happen, trust that was built up between the journalist and the follower on Twitter can be lost.

Models from Pettit (1995) and Maister et al (2000) show the ways in which one person can attempt to build trust with another. Both stress that there are levels of trust that are achieved depending on the behaviour of the one trying to achieve trust. Pettit stresses the importance of showing motivation to the trustor in order to move from basic trust to active, participatory trusting actions. Maister believes acting selfishly can negate positive steps taken by the one seeking trust.

Much of the interactions and chances to build trust between reporter and audience are done without interacting with the audience in person. However, there are certain characteristics of online interaction that can help engineer trust online. The ways in which those seeking to trust (Twitter users) can identify trustworthiness characteristics in reporters is broken down into three main points:

- Knowing what people tend to do – The problem in establishing trust online is how to do so in light of enormous uncertainty about both the magnitude and the frequency of potential harm (Friedman et al., 2000, p.35).

- Accountability – If you do not know the person with whom you are interacting and are unable to track the person to a location, there are fewer incentives for a stranger to behave with good will (Friedman et al., 2000, p.38)."

- Performance history and reputation – Meaning that the person looking to gain trust has a track record of trustworthy behaviour. This may be evidenced by qualitative statements provided by the person seeking trust (Friedman et al., 2000, p.40)."

Each point would require the journalist to show a certain amount of personality, vulnerability and transparency on Twitter, in order to gain trust from audiences on the platform. The journalist is required to show their motivations, personal beliefs, and information about their lives in order to appear worthy of trust to the user. People tend to seek out relationships which they are comfortable with, where the person they are attempting to trust interacts with them in a familiar and complete way. If the trustee (one receiving the trust) displays low levels of personality, this is not a suitable base for building trust. Therefore, it can be concluded that a journalist showing more of their personality whilst being transparent about work patterns and sources (discussed more in the next chapter) can lead to more trust potentially being generated.

The ways in which journalists build trust with audiences is changing journalistic behaviour. Where once reporters dismissed the importance of input and criticism from the audience, the opportunities for journalists and followers to interact are now nearly limitless. However, increased contact has not meant increased trust.

Self-interest, scandals and mishaps, which will be covered in this chapter, have been reasons for low trust towards reporters across the UK for decades. The profession has been amongst the least trusted in the United Kingdom since statistics have been tracked. The following sections of this chapter analyse the different metrics that have measured and explain the fractured relationship between journalism in the UK and its audience.

4.1 - How much do we distrust journalism?

Trust can broadly be defined as, "a feeling of reasonable confidence in our ability to predict another's behaviour" (Chalmers, 2019). What contributes to that feeling, or the absence of that feeling can be much more nuanced. For example, The Pew Research Center in the US found that trust in journalism is often divided along partisan, political lines, and that levels of trust are extremely low across all news media (Funk et al, 2019). The Edelman Trust Barometer announced that 'public trust in media is at an all-time low' (Edelman, 2020). However, the 2018 Eurobarometer study shows that across the EU, trust in traditional media is high and stable, with only trust in social media and the internet showing signs of decline (European Commission, 2019) .

However, studying trust must be done in smaller areas than Europe or the USA. Global averages conceal substantial regional differences that need to be highlighted. In the UK there is very little evidence of a collapse in trust. For example, trust in the BBC is now much higher than a decade ago (Chalmers, 2019) (**fig 4.1**). However, this does not account for the recent story involving Martin Bashir and Princess Diana in 2021.

Mean score/10

| Faked content/ competitions 07-10/07 | Ross/Brand 10/08 | General Election 05/10 | Royal Wedding 04/11 | London 2012 07-08/12 | Jimmy Savile 10/12 |

7.0

General impression of the BBC

6.6

6.5

General impression of the BBC - mean score / 10
1 = extremely unfavourable; 10 = extremely favourable

5.9

I trust the BBC - mean score / 10
1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree

I Trust the BBC

Apr-Jun 04
Jul-Sep 04
Oct-Dec 04
Jan-Mar 05
Apr-Jun 05
Jul-Sep 05
Oct-Dec 05
Jan-Mar 06
Apr-Jun 06
Jul-Sep 06
Oct-Dec 06
Jan-Mar 07
Apr-Jun 07
Jul-Sep 07
Oct-Dec 07
Jan-Mar 08
Apr-Jun 08
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Apr-Jun 13
Jul-Sep 13
Oct-Dec 13
Jan-Mar 14
Apr-Jun 14
Jul-Sep 14
Oct-Dec 14
Jan-Mar 15
Apr-Jun 15
Jul-Sep 15
Oct-Dec 15
Jan-Mar 16
Apr-Jun 16
Jul-Sep 16
Oct-Dec 16
Jan-Mar 17

Fig 4.1 - Trust in BBC 2004 - 2017

4.1.1 - Journalistic Trust in the UK

Conducted in 2015, the World Values Survey found that 'the police' and 'the average person' were the most trusted groups of people in the UK, while the 'political system' was the least trusted (Inglehart et al, 2015). The same survey also found that in 1998 and 2009 (the last year the data is available in the UK from the World Values Survey), 29% of people agreed that most people can be trusted. The same rate was found in different decades. This may indicate that people in the UK do not trust each other, but other statistics provide a more nuanced answer.

The Ipsos Veracity Index, an annual UK study which has run since 1983, asks respondents how much they trust people working in different sectors to tell the truth. In 2020, the poll found that of the 1,020 people polled 56% agreed that the average person on the street would tell the truth (Ipsos Mori, 2020). This number has been slowly rising since dipping below 50% in 2007. Whilst journalists have always ranked somewhere along the bottom, it is interesting to note that trust in them is increasing, albeit slowly. In 2017, 28% of people said they trust journalists to tell the truth (Ipsos MORI, 2019). While this shows there is not a trust panic or a sudden drop-off in trust from the public, the statistics point to reporters in the UK having a problem of 'net trust' (**fig 4.2**).

Net trust in professions 2019

Net trust = % trust to tell the truth - % do not trust to tell the truth
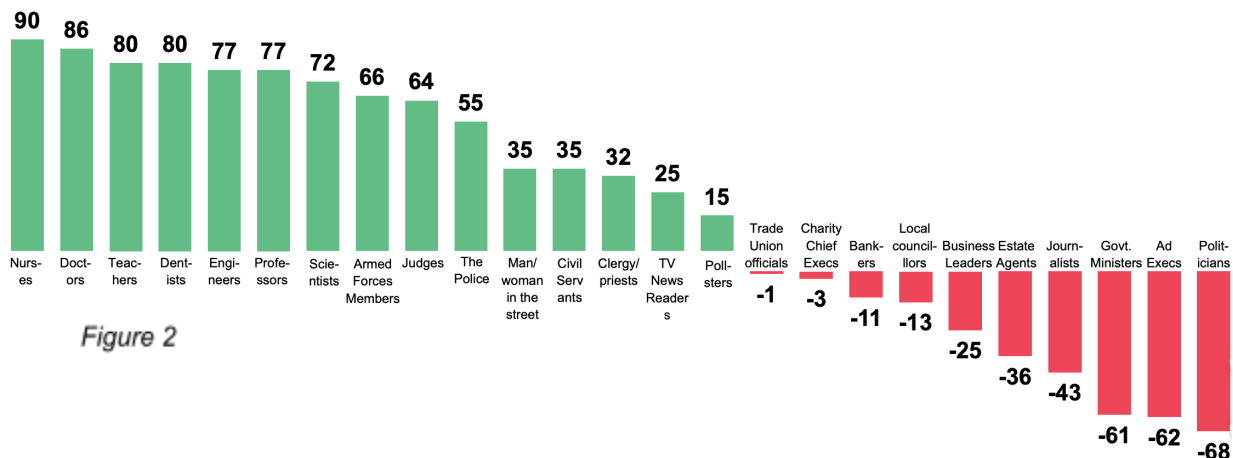
Figure 2

Fig 4.2 - Ipsos Mori Net Trust in Professions Trends

The gap between believing journalists are telling the truth, versus not trusting them to tell the truth is a wide one. Nurses, doctors and teachers are trusted to tell the truth almost universally. Conversely, politicians and advertising executives are not trusted to tell the truth by more people than those who trust them. For journalists in the UK, 69% of the public do not trust them to tell the truth. This has held relatively constant since polling began more than 30 years ago (Ipsos Mori, 2020).

Further evidence shows TV newsreaders and broadcasters are generally more trusted than print and online journalists. A study into the changing views of trust in the media found that print journalists had the highest levels of people losing trust in them, when compared to reporters working on other platforms (Chalmers, 2019). The study asked over 19,000 adults across 24 European countries how much their levels of trust had changed in certain journalistic platforms

in the past five years. The results showed the percentage of people who felt their trust dropped in those journalists:

Print: -21%

Tv/Radio: -12%

Website: -18%

People on Internet: -8%

People in real life: +10%

Although these declines are self-claimed by the respondents and not tracked over time, the data does offer a potential solution for reporters looking to build trust, despite the state of the industry. News coming from print, TV and websites from established brands of news is being seen as less reliable than information coming from friends on the internet and people in real life. One explanation of this could be the 'echo chamber' effect (Gromping, 2014).

A study identified the effect during a study of Facebook groups during Thai elections in 2014. The research found that those on similar sides of a political issue are much more likely to engage (like, comment, share) with content they agree with. Not only were participants unlikely to engage with content they disagreed with, due to the selective nature of social media, they were often unlikely to be exposed to opposing views. (Gromping, 2014).

This suggests that users do not scrutinise information they see on these tailored platforms because, for the user, the information is coming from friends and trusted sources (journalists, journalistic organisations, businesses, charities, etc). Users are less likely to question the validity of information if they trusted who they thought the source of the information was (Sundar, 2016; Kang & Sundar, 2016). This suggests:

1. Audiences may be more likely to engage and trust content if the reporting is seen on their tailored social media feeds.

2. If a reporter wants to build engagement and trust on social media, they must work to be a part of these user networks, rather than working for trust on a mass level.

The practices local and regional journalists are using to become a part of these networks, and have their content trusted once there is explored in **Chapter 4.2-4.2.1.** These practices differ to the ones being utilised by national journalists. The next chapter explains why it is important to differentiate the two when analysing trust in UK journalism.

4.1.2 - Trust in Local and Regional Journalism

Polls are conducted each year to understand the relationship and trust afforded between audiences and reporters in the UK. What is not regularly undertaken is how these numbers affect the local and regional press, not just the national newspaper titles and broadcasters. However, there are certain indicators and polls which suggest that the 'doom and gloom' of a lack of trust in journalism, may not be hitting the local press outlets as severely.

For example, a combined poll from Yougov and the independent press monitor IMPRESS found 36% of nearly 1600 adults in the UK trust local newspapers to report the truth. While being trusted by just over a third of readers, this percentage was higher than the mid market papers (Daily Mail, Daily Express) and tabloids (The Sun and the Mirror) by significant margins. However, this means that over 60% of people still do not trust the local media to contain accurate reports. When respondents in the study were asked how they would describe the British press, responses included words such as 'liars', 'untrustworthy' and 'unreliable'. Other common answers included the words 'exaggerated', 'sensationalist' and 'fake' (Impress, 2016).

A YouGov poll taken in the UK in May 2006 found that 37% of the public trusted journalists at national newspapers to tell the truth. Trust in national newspaper journalism has halved since then, and as of 2016, stood at 18% (Impress, 2016). Other polls show the picture to be slightly less bleak, with an IPSOS Mori (2020) poll showing national journalists to be trusted by 23% of people. The same poll revealed that TV newsreaders are trusted at a much higher rate than

journalists by the UK public with 67% of people saying they trust presenters to be telling the truth. No reason was given for the anomaly. However, one researcher claims the reason for the discrepancy is due to the independent oversight of OfCom, rather than the self-regulation of the print media .

"We do not really think that TV newsreaders are more virtuous than journalists for the press. But we trust them more because, as an institution, we trust broadcasters more than we trust the press. We believe that as a result of their independent and effective oversight by Ofcom, broadcasters are more likely to provide us with a reliable and credible service, and that they are not unduly compromised by self-interest (Heawood, 2016)."

While analysing trust in local media, studies have found high rates of trust in local and regional media outlets in the UK, when compared to national statistics. One in particular (funded by Yougov and Local Media Works) found 74% of over 2,000 UK adults said they trust the news and information in their local newspaper, whether online or in print. Local commercial TV and radio stations were only fractionally behind, with a trust level of 73%. In contrast, information from social media came bottom in the poll with just 22% agreeing they trusted the news and information they see on sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Tobitt, 2018).

Local journalism appears to be trusted much more consistently than it's national counterpart. One reason for this may be due to the two sets of reporters operating with different working practices, promoting the audience to perceive them differently. In a study of 141 local

journalists, they were asked to rank the top roles of a journalist (Hanusch, 2014). The top three were:

- Inform

- Community Focus

- Accuracy

164 national journalists ranked the top roles as:

- Inform

- Watchdog

- Investigate

This suggests that local journalists are more invested in their communities and want to keep the focus on their community, while using a reporting style which stresses sticking to the facts. National journalists appear to want to fulfill the role of *watchdog*, reporting negative news about those that do wrong. It relates to evidence that suggests local media avoid sensationalising issues and promote harmony (Janowitz, 1952; Vine, 2001).

Research has explored some possible explanations for the differences in practice between local and national reporters. In a study of four British newspapers, O'Neil & O'Connor (2008) found 'the local journalist is not keeping an ear to the ground and interacting with the local

community' (p. 498). Findings show that local residents were used as sources in only 5% of stories. This suggests these reporters are passive recipients of information, relaying national stories rather than active investigators of new information in their communities. This may be due to not wanting to disrupt local economic and political power which local journalists rely on for access and quotes (Franklin 2006). Local journalism often relies on funding from local advertisers. Economic and other market pressures for local and regional media outlets will be further explored in **chapter 4.1.3**

Evidence shows that the differences in how local/regional and national reporters gather and report news may have an impact on how much they are trusted by audiences. The 2019 report found that only the Financial Times beat regional print products for trust. On a scale of 1-10, local and regional newspapers scored 6.4 for trust rating – ahead of The Times, Sky News, The Guardian, The Independent, the Daily Telegraph, HuffPost, the Daily Mirror, the Daily Mail, The Canary, Buzzfeed and The Sun, which scored just 3.92 (**fig 4.3**). Only the FT with a score of 6.68, BBC News (6.85), ITV News (6.82), and Channel 4 News (6.66) scored a higher trust rating among 2,023 people surveyed (Newman et al, 2019)

BRAND TRUST

United Kingdom

	Aware		Users	
BBC News	6.85		7.15	
ITV News	6.82		7.23	
Financial Times	6.68		7.63	
Channel 4 News	6.66		7.27	
Regional or local newspaper	6.40		6.84	
The Times	6.39		7.30	
Sky News	6.34		6.86	
The Guardian	6.21		7.12	
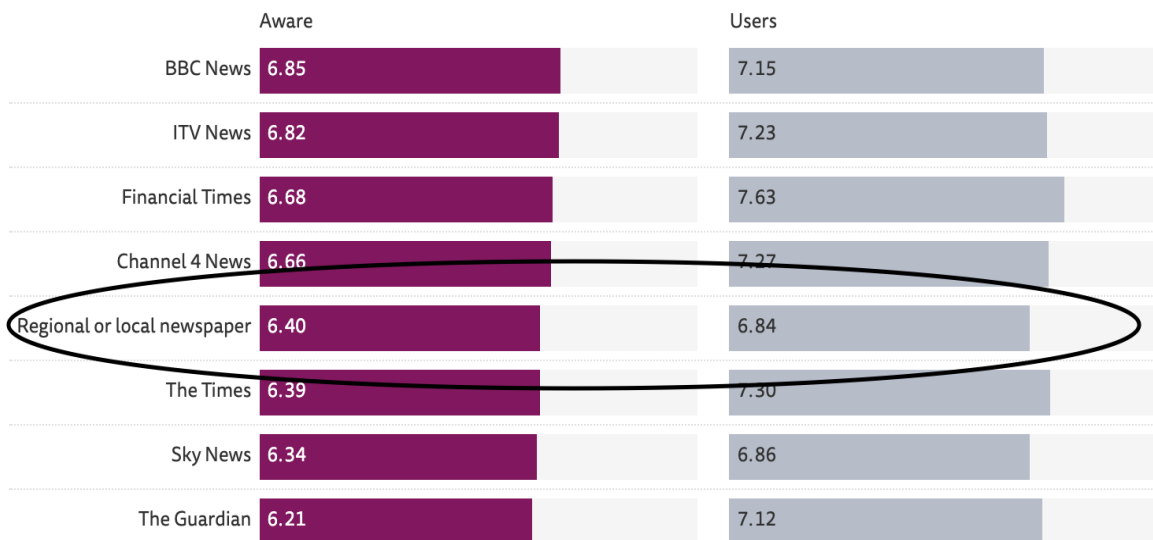
Fig 4.3 - Trust in UK Media Brands

Part of the reason these trust scores are higher for local journalism compared to other national titles may be due to the type of news being covered. Hanusch's (2014) study found non-national journalists hold accuracy and community focus in higher regard than *watchdog* or negative reporting. Research from the annual Digital News Report suggests that this may have an effect on the habits of the audience. Almost half of those surveyed in the UK believe the national news agenda is often too negative, often not reflective of reality. More than a third say they often or sometimes avoid the news because they find it too depressing or they feel there is nothing they can do about long standing or intractable positions (Newman et al, 2019). In a follow up to the report, lead author Nic Newman suggested three ways in which local journalism can set themselves apart from the national news cycle and cultivate trust with the local audience (Linford, 2020):

1. Focus on service journalism: Help people live their lives in a smarter way or inspire them in new directions. Local media can not only develop resources or curate experiences but can also use new internet technologies to harness the knowledge and expertise of local communities.

2. Consider more constructive journalism: Finding stories of hope rather than fear and giving people a sense of agency on solving local problems. Local news providers could be at the heart of this, curating meaningful engagement around issues that matter.

3. Rather than providing a general news service for all, local news should put beats and passions at the heart of its reporting: Take advantage of the internet's strengths around narrowcasting. This means super serving dozens of different niches such as football, gardening, food and culture but in new ways though emails, podcasts and direct communication on social media.. A local news provider of the future needs to build more of these niches and combine these with investigations and campaigns of general interest.

These suggestions would require investments of time and money from news organisations and individual journalists, things they simply do not have in the current media climate in the UK. In order to continue to exist, local news reporters may need to redefine themselves as the indispensable beating heart of the communities they serve, rather than a conduit of

'cheer-leading boosterism' (Kaniss, 1991). They could provide value through the way they spark and curate conversations. These recommendations would require journalists to commit to a social media presence and incorporate the ideals of transparency in their reporting.

Trust in journalism overall, local or national, has fallen by around 10% in the UK since 2014 (Newman et al, 2019). While studies show that trust levels may be lower in national outlets, local reporters face different pressures. The reality for many local and regional reporters is that they are overworked. Budget cuts and staff reductions have been a normality across the industry. The next chapter examines how this impacts on the working routines of reporters, especially on social media.

4.1.3 - Market Pressures on Local and Regional Outlets

Research had noted a transformation in local British journalism, a shift away from being a community leader and holding those in power to account, to a business trying to earn a profit. "The achievement of profit and a preoccupation with the bottom line trumps journalistic ambition" (Franklin, 2005, 2006). The web and social media both worsened and quickened the threat to the financial viability of local journalism. In a study of British regional print newsrooms, Whittington (2020) found that the onset of the web led to declining production of public interest news, replaced by publishing popular or 'trending' content to increase audiences and profits online.

The reason for this stems from dwindling circulation of newspapers over the past two decades, corresponding with the growing use of the web in society. From 2008-2018, the use of the internet doubled over the decade. Currently 96% of UK homes use the internet (ONS, 2020). As a result, more journalism went online because audiences flocked to it, due to the ease of use and free nature of the web. In April 2020, over three out of four adults said they use the internet or social media to find news. This went up to 90% in the under 35 year old demographic (Newman et al, 2020). This has caused widespread declines in newspaper circulation and revenue leaving outlets to cut staff (putting more pressure to perform on the remaining reporters), restrict spending and for some, close their doors.

A review of national and local newspaper revenues from 2007-2017 showed that the amount of money made from newspaper advertising fell by nearly 75%. This problem is compounded by the fact that digital advertising revenues make up just 13% of the overall money earned by newspapers through advertising. While those profits increased throughout the decade, it was not enough to make up for the massive amounts of money lost due to less circulation and less income from newspaper advertising (Mediatique, 2018). A study of the future of online advertising found that print and digital advertising for newspapers, their main source of income outside of circulation, is due to fall another 34% by 2024 (Wieser, 2019). This means that funding problems discussed throughout this section are only due to get worse.

This bleak financial situation is happening despite news publishers successfully growing online audiences. The issue continues to be monetising online activity. Google, Facebook and online classifieds have captured the majority of advertising spend in areas such as property, recruitment and local services, once a mainstay in newspaper advertising. This problem is magnified by the fact that local and regional outlets are reliant on Twitter, Facebook, Google and other social media platforms to grow audiences. Those running these platforms know this and are able to create revenue sharing agreements with outlets which mean they get 30% of the advertising profits gained by the outlets, despite not actually creating any content (Mediatique, 2018).

The effect of the web on the financial future of local news was considered dire enough to warrant a government appointed review. The 'Cairncross' report examined the sustainability of

the production and distribution of high-quality journalism, and especially the future of the press, in a dramatically changing market (Cairncross, 2019). The report found that government subsidies are needed to support high-quality local journalism. Despite local and regional media appearing to be amongst the most trusted outlets for news, they are left unable to fund the undertaking of proper investigative journalism mainly due to lower circulation due to the rise in popularity of the internet social media (Cairncross, 2019).

The review also noted difficulties in recommending large-scale changes to all publishers in the UK due to the unique pressures faced at the local and national level. Bigger national outlets will have more money to fund quality journalism. A lack of revenue from low circulation rates for local and regional papers has resulted in reduced staffing, closed local offices, and less money available for investment in the substantial innovation that a successful digital future requires (Cairncross, 2019).

A 2019 study from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport studied the rate of these newsroom closures and found that local and regional press outlets are folding with increasing regularity. The data revealed that of the 380 areas covered by a daily title in 2007, only 142 remained in 2019. The number of local titles per district in the UK declined from 2.53 to 1.46 in the same 12-year-period (Lavender et al, 2020). According the the researchers, this means there are less journalists covering local areas leading to a multitude of problems, including:

- Limited staff means limited ability to cover local issues in-depth

- Local press staff being cut and progressively replaced by stories from national wires or public relations copy

The Lavender study went one step further, finding a correlation between areas with lower levels of local newspaper circulation also reporting lower local election turnout (Lavender et al, 2020). This was noted as far back as 2006 when Franklin, Court and Cushion (2006) tracked the reduction of coverage in local elections in local press going back to the 1980's. They found smaller staff sizes due to funding issues, and cuts due to lower circulation, meant less content about local relevant or policy-oriented coverage. This can be exemplified in a 2008 study of nearly 3000 articles in local newspapers in West Yorkshire. The investigation shows that 76% of articles studied only cited one source. This implies that journalists do not have the time or resources to dedicate to in-depth reporting in their area, leading to a lack of diversity of viewpoints in local coverage (O'Neil & O'Connor, 2008). In fact, the Cairncross review found that approximately 1,700 additional reporters are needed by local and regional journalism outlets across the UK in order to adequately cover local news (Cairncross, 2019).

A significant part of the problem for local journalism outlets is that there simply is not a new audience. Younger audiences do not seem to care for local news and are therefore less apt to make consuming content from local and regional sources a part of their routine. According to the Reuters Digital News Report 2020, UK respondents ranked near the bottom when asked if they had any interest in local news (31%). This statistic went lower with age as 18-24 year olds recorded the lowest amount of interest. According to the researchers this is partially due to

local media outlets investing more slowly in product innovations such as mobile sites and video formats due to small budgets and staff. Older demographics appear to have an overall higher interest in local news, meaning these outlets cater to the audiences who buy newspapers (Newman et al, 2020). This helps with circulation, staffing and profits in the short term but creates a cliff edge in which local media may cease to exist if their product does not sell in the future.

This is exemplified by a 2019 study which found that local news websites only generate 7.4 visits per user each month. This is compared to 44.4 average monthly visits by users to national news sites. Consequently, local news websites have a less intriguing package to sell to potential advertisers, meaning less money made from online advertising with the bulk of the business going to national titles and other online platforms (Gevers, 2019).

All of these market pressures add up to a gloomy picture for the future of local and regional journalism. Decreasing revenues and audiences mean an increase in workload for the reporters who are able to stay on staff. The smaller staff sizes and increased workload mean that quality journalism is becoming more difficult for these reporters to perform. Being stretched so thin, local and regional journalism staff are regurgitating national stories, using one source for content and are simply not being able to cover local government proceedings. If they are not able to meet the basic functions of the press due to lack of funding, this implies the need for these outlets is disappearing.

However, as Lavender et al (2019) stated, areas with higher levels of local newspaper circulation also report higher local election turnout. When local journalism is performed well, it can have an impact on readers. The next section will explore how journalists are attempting to adapt to their more prominent role in trust building with followers on Twitter.

4.2 - The Burden of the Reporter

For as long as studies have shown a low amount of faith in trust in mainstream journalism, recommendations have been made to reporters on how to appear more trustworthy to their audiences. In 1999, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) recommended that journalists make a greater effort to explain the editorial decision-making process to readers (Urban, 2002). At the speech where these findings were announced, Edward Seaton, editor of the Manhattan (Kan.) Mercury, told journalists that "explaining reasons for our practices will soften a lot of the negative perceptions. We need clear statements, in writing, about what constitutes acceptable journalistic practice.... And they should be published so readers can understand and evaluate our decisions" (Seaton, 1999).

The implication of this being that the readers' ability to witness, to evaluate, and, therefore, to trust, indicates the valued role transparency plays in facilitating journalistic trust. These findings were released seven years before Twitter was invented. The issue of reporters building trust in journalism through individual action is not new. Technology now presents the opportunity to move the process forward and begin building more transparent and trusting relationships between journalists and their followers online.

Twitter presented an opportunity for changing journalistic norms. Examples of this include being more open with opinions, more liberal in sharing the gatekeeping role, and more thorough in being transparent about the news process (Singer, 2005; Olsen, 2008; Rosenberg, 2009). As Twitter has gained normative status within the field (Lasorsa et al., 2012), the social

media platform has become a place where the reputations of reporters are made and maintained. With the large number of journalists and audiences on Twitter, reporters are able to build trusted, meaningful reputations - or not - through their tweets and interactions (Barnard, 2014).

Government inquiry recommendations and actions from both Leveson and Cairincross have not provided any large scale improvements to how journalism is viewed by the public in the UK. Fair or not, the burden of building trust in journalism has come down to individual, entrepreneurial actions taken by reporters. Social media has made room for the individual voice to be able to be heard. Traditional gatekeepers have lost their monopoly in the ownership of communication channels. Movements based on Twitter (#blacklivesmatter, #metoo, political movements) show that the platform can have real world implications. Therefore, if journalists want to have a direct impact in attaining trust with their followers, the best way to do that is to create their own voice away from the traditional media outlet they work for. Where there is a decline in trust, perceived or actual, this can be seen as an opportunity for journalists to build their own relationship with the audience.

4.2.1 - Practical changes from journalists

Several academics have found differing ways to practically use Twitter, in order to appear more trustworthy to the audience. Barnard (2014) found that a large portion of mainstream journalists appear to use Twitter primarily as a means of sharing content and staying current on news. Elliot (2009) believed Twitter has fundamentally changed how journalists perform their roles. In the era before social media and web 2.0, journalists were encouraged to report objectively to a mass audience through one-way communication. Due to the way Twitter has changed the field, the 'new paradigm' (Elliot, 2009) or pattern of work for journalists looks like this:

1. Notice issue and events;

2. Use own reporting as well as open sourcing;

3. Filter that through journalistic perspective;

4. For consumption by targeted audiences;

5. Who then provides feedback.

The key differences between the old and new paradigms are around the ideas of objectivity and feedback. Traditional practices would call for equal, fair and objective reporting. This would often involve presenting two opposing sides to every story. New patterns of work on Twitter involve the reporter filtering their personal perspective, or at least acknowledging it. New practices also call for allowing story ideas to come from anyone and having much more of an *open-door policy* where users can contribute ideas for a story and be involved with the story as

it forms, through to follow-up discussion once the story is published (Sterns, 2015; McBride and Rosenstiel, 2014; Gilmor, 2010).This has been referred to as 'participatory transparency', where users are invited to participate in different stages in the news production process (Karlsson, 2011, p.286). Reporters who utilise these types of practices for the creation and dissemination of material and who engage with the public more fully and directly will be the journalist who has the best chance of building trusting relationships with followers.

Karlsson (2011) also discussed 'disclosure transparency' on Twitter. Broadly, this means journalists using transparency should publish links to the original material and sources that are used. This means being forthright about where information has come from. When the information is personally collected by the journalist, disclosure transparency means publishing the source material (such as transcripts of interviews) used in order to build confidence and trust with the audience (Karlsson, 2011, p.285; Beckett, 2008a; Beckett, 2008b; Harwood, 2012).

No longer can journalists retreat to a 'fortress newsroom,' (Karlsson, 2011, p. 284) where a story can be fully crafted and then published when the journalist deems it ready for consumption. Instant information and social media now require journalists to publish information as it is received. As journalism fights to stay trusted in a social media age where information can be published and consumed by any user around the world, it has to start by showing its work (Sterns, 2015).

Twitter offers a system where bits of information can be reported, contested, denied or verified in the open, involving journalists and the public (Hermida, 2010). However, studies show that a significant number of reporters go beyond just the facts (Lasorsa et al 2012; Sheffer and Schultz 2010; Vis 2013). Research indicates journalists utilise a space where the separation between the personal and private is fragile, and the hierarchical roles of reporter, editor and audience are blurred. The unstructured, open space of Twitter allows reporters to express opinions and personal commentary, which may also assist in the trust building process.

Research shows that those seeking news on social media want to know more about the people they are getting their information from (Hardin, 2006; Bruns, 2011; Heravi & Harrower, 2016). Audiences seek to connect with the entirety of the person, not just on the basis of a reporter putting out videos and articles. Tweets and social media messages visible to the audience need to give a glimpse into the background of the reporter, a view into their lives outside of news, in order for the audience to gain maximum trust in them.

In 2008, Keeble and Mair (2008) found that before any consumer can make a judgement about whether or not to trust an organisation or individual, the consumer seeks background information about who they are placing their trust in. Results showed the best way to instill trust and repeat interactions between reporters and audience members is for the journalist to publish more about themselves, letting users know who they are and what their motivations are as a person, just as two people might share in a face-to-face conversation (Keeble & Mair, 2008).

A 2011 study affirms the earlier study finding that journalists who maintain a purely professional profile may not be seen to be as credible as those who interact with their followers (Jahng & Littau, 2011). 156 people were asked to evaluate Twitter profiles from regional journalists. Results showed the journalists who interacted with the audience were seen more positively and as more credible than those who did not interact and acted purely as transmitters of information. This is in line with the ideas of several researchers (Hardin, 2006; Harwood, 2012; Alejandro, 2010; Blöbaum, 2014), implying that the consistent use of transparent practices by journalists has the possibility of leading to increased credibility and trust between themselves and the users.

Researchers and journalists alike have proposed that transparency is changing the way reporters are building a sense of trustworthiness (Karlsson, 2014). It has been suggested several times that transparent actions taken by those in journalism improves credibility, and that users will put greater trust in news media as a result of this shift in journalistic practice. (Gilmor, 2004; Karlsson, 2011; Kavach & Rosenstiel ,2001; Lasorsa et al, 2012). By connecting directly with users or by pointing them to other content, journalists can use Twitter to distribute news, find sources and gather information, as well as increase audience trust and their own credibility (Cozma & Chen, 2012).

The next chapter outlines the research questions this thesis will attempt to answer. These questions were crafted to reflect the past research in the literature review, and what information the researcher believes can make a contribution to the field.

4.3 - Research questions

The overall RQ to this study asks, 'How do journalists on Twitter build trust on Twitter?' Previous research has identified how transparency can be used to build trust on Twitter. However, there is little literature available about transparency use by local and regional journalists on Twitter. Therefore, the following three questions are being asked in order to find how journalist's use transparency to build trust. The questions are:

RQ1: Is there a difference in the transparency practices used on Twitter by local and regional print and broadcast journalists in the UK?

RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?

 RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices on Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?

The justifications and methods for finding these answers are found throughout Chapter 5.

5 - Research design

The aim of this study is to find out how journalists build trust on Twitter. The social media platform offers a unique way to study trust because of the potential for two-way communication between reporter and user. Journalists from print and broadcast newsrooms can listen, share, joke, discuss, evidence and empathise, where once they could only report. Research discussed in the literature review suggests that one of the main ways reporters appear worthy of trust to Twitter users is through the use of transparency practices (Meier & Reimer, 2011; Karlsson, 2011; Heravi & Harrower, 2016; Van der Wurff and Schönbach, 2013). These actions are being done on personal accounts which employers often do not have control over. Rules and guidelines may influence the use of accounts but the choices of how reporters should use the platform are up to the individual.

This study is designed to find if broadcast and print reporters make those choices differently, focusing on the use of transparency practices. This will be undertaken with two distinct methods: Twitter data analysis and qualitative interviews. The mixed-methods design is being used to understand if journalists in the UK are using transparency practices on Twitter, and if they are using these practices to build trust.

Researchers from differing backgrounds (Denzin, 1978; Bouchard, 1976) agree that using more than one method to answer a research question can provide a more valid answer with results which will be harder to prove wrong in the future . Thus, the convergence or agreement

between two methods ". . . enhances our belief that the results are valid and not a methodological artifact (Bouchard, 1976, p.268)." A specific mixed-method approach known as sequential or explanatory design will be used throughout this study. This allows the researcher to form the quantitative study prior to the qualitative, thus utilising that quantitative data to provide better questions for the proceeding interviews. (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

As social media has become more popular, journalists are finding new ways of working in order to serve audiences. Journalists who tweet operate on a neutral platform, and do not face the same level of oversight, nor the same necessity, to stay on-topic journalistically (Lasorsa et al, 2012, p.24). Therefore, they are free to use their Twitter output as an extension of their work, a personal social media, or a mix of both. These choices, to share, connect and communicate with users outside of the one-way communication of articles and videos, are often acts of transparency.

Transparency is communicated to audiences in several different ways. Singer (2005) wrote that the breaking of journalistic norms by expressing nonpartisan opinions began as early as 2004. Singer (2005) and Karlsson (2010) concur that the use of links to support accountability and evidence are markers of transparency. Hedman (2016) believed there were three explicit transparency practices: disclosure, participatory and personal. That study showed a wide variance of reporters disclosing evidence, participating in discussion with users and sharing personal information on Twitter (Hedman. 2016). The freedom to make these choices with

limited editorial influence, combined with a consistently low amount of trust in the traditional journalism brands (Ipsos Mori, 2020; Newman et al, 2019), have created an opportunity for journalists to craft relationships and trust in themselves, rather than the brand they are employed by.

This study will analyse tweets (t=17,514) sent by reporters (N=52) working in local and regional markets across the UK. The three-pronged analysis will measure the prevalence of transparency practices first identified by Lasorsa et al (2012), the statistical significance of the data, and the relationship of the variables to one another through a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA). Together, the outcomes will answer **RQ1: Is there a difference in the transparency practices used on Twitter by local and regional print and broadcast journalists in the UK?**

The same quantitative approach will be used to measure the impact of a situational variable on the data set. A national election occurred during the tweet collection period. Tweets from around these events will be compared to the overall data set to answer **RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?**

After the quantitative data is analysed, qualitative interviews will be conducted with 10 of the 52 journalists in the Twitter data sample. These interviews are being conducted to better understand the motivations of why reporters use transparency practices on Twitter. These answers will answer **RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices of Twitter with the intent to build trust with users?**

5.1 - Research ethics

This project faced no problems from an ethical perspective. A thorough application through Leeds Trinity University ethical approval board noted that informed participatory consent was needed prior to interviews. The reporters interviewed agreed to have their identities revealed for this thesis. This was deemed important by the researcher due to the thesis stressing the importance of transparency. All were supplied with an informed consent letter detailing how information would be stored and their rights for pulling out of the study if they choose to.

Consent to have their tweets analysed for this study was not asked for as Twitter profiles are in the public domain making consent to use the data in this study not needed. However, journalists were asked to be identified in the quantitative study, due to a focus of this study being transparency.

5.2 - Quantitative analysis

A quantitative content analysis will be used to examine Twitter output from local and regional UK reporters. The analysis will utilise a three-pronged approach to answer the overall RQ 'How do journalists build trust on Twitter?' This approach is being utlised as each test will provide part of the answer. Separate, the outcomes will not provide valid or meaningful results. Together, they will help to suggest how journalists are using transparency on Twitter, and if the practices of print and broadcast journalists differ.

Prevalence **Significance** **Relationship**

Fig 5.1 - Quantitative Analysis Approach

Fig 5.1 shows the three approaches which will be used to analyse the quantitative data in this study. In order to measure the prevalence of transparency practices used, a content analysis will be conducted. This will provide data on the usage of each transparency variable used by each journalist in the participant group. A statistical significance test, the Mann-Whitney U test will then be used to calculate whether the difference in usage of transparency variables between print and broadcast reporters on Twitter are statistically significant. Finally, the relationship between each variable and every other variable will be calculated and illustrated within a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) (Lingoes & Roskam, 1973). This will then be cross examined with

the prevalence data to identify if there is a link between transparency practices and type of journalist (print or broadcast). This type of procedure has proved to be a reliable and beneficial method of exploring the relationship between different behavioural variables (Canter & Heritage, 1990).

5.3 - Participants

The tweets of local and regional journalists (N=52) were examined from the dates of 20 April –

20 July 2017**.** This sample is made up of 21 print journalists (43% of sample) and 31 broadcast

journalists (57% of the sample). These reporters worked for 14 different print and broadcast

news outlets in five markets from across England and Wales. These journalists worked for BBC

and ITV regional broadcast newsrooms, and five regional or local papers. These markets, outlets

and reporters will be selected to be a part of the sample after using a random sampling

approach. The follower chapters explain how the sample will be created for this quantitative

content analysis.

5.3.1 - Selecting Markets

From the outset, this study looked to focus on journalists working for local newspapers and local television markets. This did not include regional broadcasters such as ITV and BBC regional outlets, but rather the 21 communities in the UK which have local television licenses in the communities. These stations are funded through the community itself or self-funding (Ofcom, N.D). These community broadcast television stations differ from BBC or ITV outlets which are more regional in coverage, rather than being local coverage to a particular town and surrounding area.

For a journalist to be included in this study, they had to work in a market which met certain specifications and criteria. One of those stipulations was a market having a local broadcast outlet. Another stipulation was having a daily newspaper title which operated in the same market as the local broadcaster. Lastly, the market must have a population between 150,000-300,000. The population stipulation is due to research which states how journalism outlets in communities of vastly different sizes are difficult to compare in academic studies (Nielsen, 2015, p.4). This barred large communities from inclusion such as: London, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Sheffield, while keeping the available selected markets to outlets of similar sizes.

Utilising the criteria above, 11 markets were available to study. They were:

- Preston
- Brighton
- Oxford
- Newcastle
- Swansea
- Bristol

- Nottingham
- Hampshire
- Cambridge
- York
- Grimsby

However, only five were selected to be studied due to time and budget constraints of this study. To select the five to study, a random draw was performed. This kind of random selection is also known as simple random sampling and is a system where each participant (market) has an equal chance of being selected. To choose markets completely at random was done with the intention of taking away bias, and to give the study a representative population of the local and regional journalists throughout the UK (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). The randomly selected markets which will be studied are: Brighton, Oxford, Preston, Newcastle, Swansea.

5.3.2 - Selecting Newsrooms

When the markets have been selected, the next step is to select which outlets are to be included in order to know which journalists to follow and analyse their Twitter output. The justification for selecting which broadcast news outlet to observe is quite simple. There is only one local broadcast news outlet per market. Selecting which print outlets to observe is also a simple process, as none of the five markets which will be randomly selected have more than one daily print title.

The media outlets selected:

- Brighton
  - Argus Newspaper
  - Brighton TV
- Oxford
  - Oxford Times
  - That's Oxfordshire
- Preston
  - Lancashire Evening Post
  - That's Lancashire
- Newcastle
  - Evening Chronicle
  - Made in TyneWear
- Swansea
  - South Wales Evening Post
  - Bay TV Swansea

A pilot study was conducted, collecting and analysing the tweets of the print and local broadcast journalists. This consisted of an initial three-month collection of tweets which was conducted from 20 April – 20 July 2017. During the analysis of these tweets from the community broadcast journalists, it was discovered that the amount of tweets they contribute would not be enough

to have a meaningful impact to the study, especially when compared to the volume of tweets being contributed from print journalists. The number of tweets for some journalists over the three- month period was less than 30, with two of the observed community journalists only tweeting nine times.

It was also concluded that during the initial analyses which occurred during August 2017 that newspaper journalists from the selected markets were covering news not just from their town, but also cities and villages from surrounding areas, much like a regional reporter would be like at the BBC or ITV regional broadcast outlets. Therefore, the decision was made to examine the Twitter feeds of ITV and BBC journalists in the same regional markets as the print journalists, therefore omitting the original local broadcast tweet collection. This was accomplished by going back to the original tweet collection dates between April and July 2017 and collecting the tweets of the selected BBC and ITV broadcast reporters.

Upon review, journalists from the following newsrooms will be analysed for this thesis

- Brighton
    - o Brighton Argus
    - o BBC Southeast
    - o ITV Meridian
- Oxford
    - o Oxford Times
    - o BBC South
- Preston
    - o Lancashire Evening Post
    - o BBC Northwest
    - o ITV Granada
- Newcastle
    - o Evening Chronicle
    - o BBC Look North (Northeast and Teesside)

- o   ITV Tyne Tees
● Swansea
  - o   South Wales Evening Post
  - o   BBC Cymru
  - o   ITV Wales

As can be seen, Oxford is the only location which does not have two television stations in the market. This is due to the fact that ITV Meridian has a coverage area which includes both Brighton and Oxford. ITV Meridian is included in the Brighton area due to having headquarters which are closer to Brighton than Oxford.

5.3.3 - Skewed Sample Size

The change from BBC/ITV reporters included in this study from the original community broadcasters had an effect on this study, specifically in the sample sizes. Originally, the size of the participant groups were the same, with equal numbers of print and broadcast journalists represented. With the inclusion of both ITV and BBC journalists in a market, compared to reporters from one print outlet, the sample became skewed.

While this may reflect a more real world sample of the number of print and broadcast journalists on Twitter, the skewed sample impacts the tests the researcher is able to run to understand the significance of the data. With normally distributed data, results are often measured by comparing the means of the data set. Skewed data resulting from the different sized groups (print=21, broadcast=31), makes these values less significant. The impact of the skewed data meant that using a parametric test (such as a t-test or ANOVA) was not appropriate. Parametric tests, or tests for normally distributed data should only be considered when the best fit for the data set is to use the mean as the value of central tendency, and sample size is relatively large. If these assumptions are not met, powerful and effective inferences regarding the data cannot be made. Non-parametric tests, however, do not rely on the same assumptions. The use of non-parametric tests is discussed in **chapter 5.5.**

5.3.4 - Selecting Journalists

Journalists selected for inclusion in this study are required to be employed by one of the above outlets. They were also required to have a Twitter username, or 'handle', which includes something about the organisation they are employed by, or list their media organisation in the Twitter biography. This ensured a consistency in the data when comparing how a reporter utilises their Twitter account. Some journalists maintain just one account, using it for both personal and professional use. Others create and maintain separate accounts for work and personal use. This study does not focus on journalists using separate accounts but rather how journalists involved in the study choose to tweet when representing themselves as a journalist on Twitter.

Judgement sampling was considered by the researcher in order to select journalists to include in the study. A judgement, or purposeful sample relies upon developing a sample based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area, the available literature and evidence from the study itself (Cresswell & Plano-Clark 2018). In terms of this study, the researcher considered designing parameters where journalists from the outlet will be sorted into what discipline of news they covered (general news, health, sport, etc). Then, journalists would be selected at random from their individual categories.

However, this study will use a framework of random generation. The positionality as a former journalist discussed in **Chapter 1.1** influenced this choice. The knowledge that a news organisation may have many news reporters, fewer sports reporters and possibly only one

health or arts reporter meant random selection provided an equal chance for all journalists to be represented in the research. Gravetter and Forzano (2011) state that the purpose of using random sampling, "is that it removes bias from the selection procedure and should result in representative samples" (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011, p.146). This study provides a representative example of regional and local journalists, in which trends can be determined to provide a reliable answer as to how journalists across the UK are using the social media platform.

The reporters will be found by using Twitter's search function. The platform has a search option which allows a user to search for accounts using keywords. Here, the researcher can type in the name of the outlet and note each journalist who met the criteria. For example, when looking for journalists to be involved from the Lancashire Evening Post, the research searched for accounts which included 'Lancashire Evening Post' or 'LEP' which is a popular shortened title for the print outlet. This process will be repeated for each outlet with the results listed above.

However, not all journalists found by the search process are included in the study. Those chosen to be analysed will be required to provide regular content to Twitter in order to have material in which to analyse. Accounts found will be discounted from the study if it is found that they do not regularly, if ever, utilise Twitter.

5.3.5 - Tweet Collection

In order to collect the tweets for analysis, this study will use a free internet programme called If This, Then That (IFTTT). IFTTT allows the user to create 'recipes', wherein the user can design different programmes to work together. In this project, Twitter and Google Sheets (similar to Microsoft Excel) will pair together to gather and sort data. When a selected journalist tweets, the information of who sent it, when, the content of the tweet and a link to see the tweet directly, is input into a Google Spreadsheet. The recipe for this study will gather tweets for 91 days, from 20 April-20 July 2017.

5.4 – Content Analysis

A content analysis is 'Any qualitative and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meaning (Patton, 2002, p. 453). Specifically, this content analysis seeks to compare reporters working in different mediums. Print journalists and broadcast TV reporters have differing working patterns. This analysis will help to find if Twitter encourages these journalists to perform their roles more similarly, through the use of transparency practices.

The content analysis is the first type of analysis which will be undertaken for the quantitative portion of this mixed-methods study (see **chapter 5.2**). Content analyses have been used in several studies of journalistic work practices. Singer (2005)used a content analysis of blogs to find how the internet was changing journalistic norms of objectivity. On Twitter specifically, content analyses have been used by several academics:

- Hambriek et al (2010) studied how professional athletes tweet, connecting directly with fans, thereby negating the role of a reporter.
- Karlsson (2011) analysed how journalists show their 'backstage' actions (news gathering, writing, editing) in tweets. The open nature of the web and Twitter provides reporters the space to 'lift the curtain' on the journalistic process.

- Barnard (2014) found that journalistic work practices are changing. The researcher identified eight practices that had been occurring offline, that were now occurring primarily on Twitter.

- Jahng and Littau (2011) found that journalists who communicate with users and do not operate a purely professional Twitter feed may be seen as more credible.

All of these studies analyse journalistic behaviours on Twitter the researchers deem transparent. However, it is the transparency practices identified by Lasorsa et al (2012) that this study will use in the content analysis to identify the prevalence of transparency journalists are using in their tweeting practice. While other studies identified transparent practices journalists perform on Twitter, Lasorsa et al (2012) identified seven characteristics which are the by-product of choices journalists must make when deciding how to tweet. These choices include:

Non-partisanship and impartiality

When using Twitter, reporters must decide how much of their own opinion to share when they are reporting information. Twitter allows the reporter to choose to report while making their opinion known, or remain impartial. These choices lead to journalists using tweets which are *majority opinion (MajO)* or *minority opinion (MinO).*

Gatekeeping

Described in **chapter 2,** gatekeeping is the journalistic practice of deciding what information the

public does and does not see. This role has changed as social media has become a normal

working practice of reporters. Instead of editors deciding what stories make it to print or

broadcast and what doesn't, reporters now have the ability to share information with their

followers, outside of the outlet they work for. This is done via *retweeting (RT)*. A retweet shares

another tweeter's message, plus the identification of the original source. These messages are

verbatim, giving them access to their audience. This negates the significance of the gatekeeper,

as more information is available outside of the stories selected to be published.

Accountability

Twitter provides a platform where journalists can provide accountability, evidence and support

for their reporting. Journalists have several choices to accomplish this on Twitter. This study will

look at four specific actions. *Job talking* allows reporters to share their process for creating

news. *Discussing* tweets are used in two-way communication on Twitter, where the reporter

and users can interact in real time. Some tweets only about the journalist's personal life. These

personalising tweets about non-job-related information about the journalist's personal life can

contribute to accountability. Finally, *linking* or, or using external hyperlinks in the tweet can be

included in tweets to provide evidence to support the original tweet or other relevant

information about how and where the journalist obtained the information in the original.

This content analysis will also code for prevalence of live tweets. The Lasorsa et al study avoided

measuring this because of the tendency for some journalists to use it a lot, and some to use it

minimally, if at all. These tweets, which are used to update live events, can provide wide

variance in usage. These are being included in this analysis because of their role in transparency

with followers. Live tweeting is often used to report ongoing events, instead of waiting to report

all of the information in an edited article or video. By using Twitter in this way, journalists often

share pictures and first hand accounts of what they are seeing or hearing. This provides

accountability and transparency to their reporting.

All tweets sent by the journalists during the collection period will be analysed to find if they

contain any of the transparency practices described in **chapter 5.4.1**.

5.4.1 - Codebook

Below is the codebook for this quantitative study. A codebook provides directions on how to organise qualitative information. This organisation will help the researcher to find trends in the data. The codebook defines how to organise tweets, if the tweet contains signs of transparency practice. The codebook defines and gives examples of each piece of data that the quantitative study will code for.

Variable Name	Full Definition	Example	Notes
Number of Tweets Sent	Over the collection period, the number of tweets sent		
Live Reporting Tweets	Tweets which are sent while covering a live event as it is happening.		These need to be seen in context. Often there is a tweet which states that an event is happening. Several tweets after that then provide live updates to the event.
Minor opinion (MinO)	Tweets which primarily conveyed information to followers. While opinion may be detected, the primary function of this tweet is to report information.	Joel Adams - Reporter Brighton Argus - 5 May 2017. "Surprising Newhaven and Bishopstone results. Labour - 319 Green - 227 Ukip - 227 Conservative - 1194 Libdem - 1239 (winner)	This is one-way communication reporting. Does not ask for interactivity. Links may be present but the meaning of the tweet is to report.
Major Opinion (Maj)	Tweets which primarily provide opinions or biases.Reporting information can be found in these tweets, but be coded MajO is the	Stuart Whincup - Reporter BBC Look North (NE & Tees). "Need a quick sugar rush: expect MP	This informs the follower how they feel and what may influence their reporting.

	primary meaning of the tweet is stated as an opinion.	speech this morning to be a real yawner."	
Linking	Tweets which contain an external, or hyperlink, to another website. The links will be grouped into the following categories: - the journalist's own news organization - Another news medium - Another link.	Callum Keown - Reporter Oxford Mail "With all that is going on this week - an interesting perspective. www.bit.ly/78965"	Hyperlinks often provide support to the original tweet. They also provide information about how and where the reporter obtained the information in the original tweet.
Discussion	Tweets which primarily involve a discussion between the journalist and another specified Twitter user. Discussion tweets are often a blend of personal and professional dialogue.	Elliw Mai - Reporter BBC Cmyru "@matt_lissack Still waiting for turnout figures here... Energy drinks are on!"	These are marked on Twitter "replying to,'' representing an exchange shared between the duo. Multiple exchanges can occur at once in a thread
Retweeting (RT)	Tweets which are a ''retweet,' a sharing of another Twitter user's tweet.	RT - "@jessbramer I totally refute the claim that it is "creepy and bizarre" to ask questions of a government minister, and Nadine was doing her job in asking them.	Conveys information to their followers even if they are not the one reporting it
Job talking	Tweets which primarily convey information about the journalist's job, or the process of doing their job.	Gillian Parkinson - Lancashire Evening Post - "working on pages 2/3 for Saturday's LEP. Safe to say it's a work in progress!"	This excludes self-promotion tweets, where the reporter has tweeted a link of their own story.
Personalising	Tweets which primarily convey information about the journalist's personal life.	Chrissie Reide - BBC SE "Honestly, could I love Spice Girls anymore than I already do?"	

5.4.2 - Quantitising

To accomplish the coding in this quantitative study, the researcher will utilise quantitising. Quantitisng is one way to understand the 'mess' of qualitative data (Law, 2004) by converting qualitative to quantitative data for pattern recognition purposes(Sandelowski, 2009; Emerson et al., 1995; Poland, 2002; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Ryan & Bernard, 2000;).

There are several ways in which quantitising, or quantitative translation, is possible. One such way of performing a translation is through a standardised questionnaire responses where responses are assigned numerical values via the designation of verbal anchors such as 0 = never, 1 = rarely, etc. This is often referred to as a counting method (Edwards et al., 2004; Sandelowski & Bustamante, 1986; Martin, 2004). This method has inherent problems due to the amount of subjectivity involved. When designing a study, the researcher may have an idea of what 'rarely' means. The respondent may have a different scale. Therefore, results may be skewed (Schwarz, 1999). Another group of researchers (Sandelowski and Bustamante, 1986) detailed the same issue in their study of women's experiences of unplanned C-section births. When asked to rank their experience of birth from 0-10, even the women who detailed horrific experiences never gave a score of 0. One woman stated: ''I wouldn't put myself at 0. (Sandelowski & Bustamante, 1986, p.85).''

In this study, the researcher will use a different quantitative translation called the '1 and 0' or 'presence and absence' theory. The technique allows the researcher to translate qualitative data in terms of presence or absence. Where presence of a variable occurs, the research notes the

presence of the defined behaviour, and absence where they do not (Sandelowski et al., 2009; Hanson, 2008).

To utilise quantitising in this study, the researcher will analyse qualitative Twitter data, looking for the prevalence of acts of transparency in the tweets shown by journalists. If one of the transparency practices occurs in a tweet, presence will be marked. If not, absence will be noted. However, this approach does not come without criticism. Cohen (1983) explains that converting qualitative text into quantifiable variables carries the risk of losing rationale and failing to capture the nuance of words. However, despite the issues Sandelowski et al (2009) explains that it is rare to find a way to truly convert words to numbers which captures every nuance, and that risk is worth it for the better understanding of trends within a qualitative data set.

5.5 - Significance: Statistical test
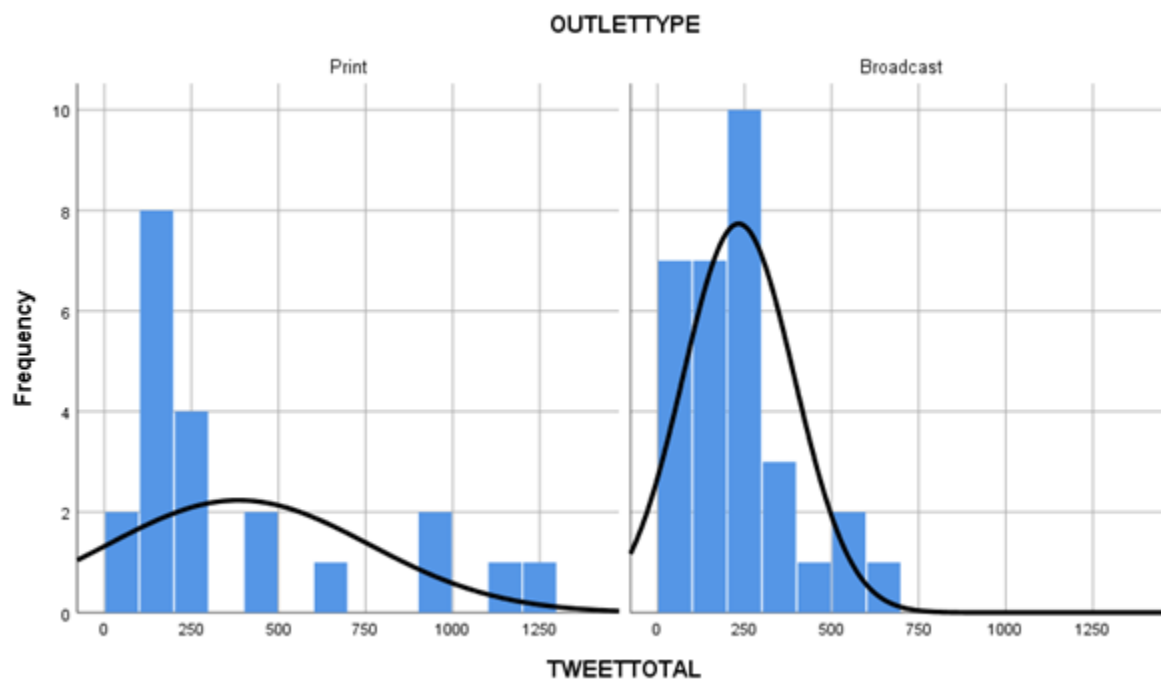
Fig 5.2 - Skewed Histograms

Histograms for the two mediums were inspected, and as the data were skewed (**Fig 5.2**), and

participant numbers were small (N=52). Therefore, the use of a parametric statistical test is

inappropriate. Parametric tests should only be considered when the best fit for the data set is to

use the mean as the value of central tendency, and sample size is relatively large. If these

assumptions are not met, powerful and effective inferences regarding the data cannot be made.

Non-parametric tests do not rely on the same assumptions, allowing for the median to be used

as the value of central tendency, if it is indeed a better fit for the data set (Nachar, 2008). A

Mann-Whitney U test is a rank-sum test which is used to compare the difference between two

independent samples, in this case, print journalists and broadcast journalists. It is considered to

be the non-parametric equivalent to the two-sample independent t-test, and determines if

there is a significant difference between groups. Therefore, the most appropriate statistical test

to be applied to this data set is a Mann-Whitney test (Mann-Whitney U).

5.6 - Relationship: Small Space Analysis

Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) is a non-metric multidimensional scaling (MDS) procedure which is based upon the assumption that the underlying structure of behaviour will be most readily appreciated if the relationship between every variable and every other variable is examined (Youngs & Ioannou, 2013). However, the relationships presented as raw mathematical data are difficult to interpret. The SSA allows for a visual representation of the relationships to be produced, which can subsequently be easily examined (Canter & Youngs, 2009). This type of MDS procedure has proved to be a reliable and beneficial method of exploring the relationship between different behavioural variables (Canter & Heritage, 1990).

SSA is often used in psychology studies in order to understand how behaviours are related to each other. For example, SSA has been used to find:

- Motivations for students joining the parent-teacher association (PTA) (Fisher, 2018),

- Mental health carers' prioritisation of key elements of caregiving and the behaviours and motivations which contribute to carer burden (Morrison & Stomski, 2019)

- How the emotions felt during a criminal offense by Mentally Disordered Offenders and the impact that specific mental disorders have on an offender's emotional experience (Spruin & Siesmaa, 2017)

To the researchers' knowledge, this has not been used in a study of journalistic behaviour. However, it is a valid test to find how behaviour variables relate to one another. In this study, the co-occurrence of variables (in this case transparency practices within journalism) are

measured by distances in geometrical space, by computing association coefficients between all variables and forming a spatial representation of items with points representing the variables. The closer points (transparency practices) are within the geometrical space, the higher their associations with each other and the further apart the points the lower the association (Youngs et al, 2014). The SSA allows for a test of the hypothesis that every variable co-occurs with the other variable, and therefore the null hypothesis would be that the variables have no clear relationship with one another.

The measure of the co-occurrence used in the present study is Jaccard's coefficient, which calculates the proportion of co-occurrences between any two variables as a proportion of all occurrences of both variables (Iannou & Oostinga, 2015).

The pattern and classification of the points (transparency practices) on the geometric space within the SSA can be examined using an approach to research known as facet theory (Canter, 1985). Facets are the overall classification of the types of variables and in simple terms, the idea is that variables which have facet elements in common will be found within the same region of space on the SSA, as they are more highly correlated than variables which do not share the same facet elements. The structure of the relationships among variables is reflected in the configuration of points (variables) into regions within the space that represent types/mediums, this is known as the regionality hypothesis (Youngs, 2004). Within this thesis, the term mediums will be used to separate print journalists and broadcast journalists and will be illustrated with boundary lines between each region. However, these boundary lines will only be included for

illustrative purposes to display the change in the meaning of points and should not be regarded

as strict indicators (such as regression lines) (Canter &Youngs, 2009).

5.7 - Situational variable

Significant events occurring during the data collection process could have impacts on the data set. Especially in journalism research, an industry which is known for reacting to the latest, or 'breaking news' event, it is imperative to understand if events had an impact on the data set, and if so, the significance of their impacts. Therefore, the three-prong approach to quantitative data analysis will be used to answer **RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?**

In order to assess differences in tweeting behaviour, the results of the overall data analysis will be compared to an analysis of transparent behaviours around a breaking news event. Situational variables have been used to analyse several different types of phenomeno, including:

- Fear or anxiety during parties, committee meetings and romantic dates (Trower et al., 1978).

- Decisions made by players during basketball games depend on the situation and environment (Gomez et al., 2013).

- Analysing the growth and professional readiness of youth soccer players (Caballero et al., 2017).

- Consumer behaviour when attempting to understand why certain people buy certain items (Assael, 2004; Cote et al., 1985).

- How do particular age groups respond to a number of stresses while driving (Shiner and Compton, 2004).

- What are the environmental influences which encourage students to cheat on tests (Hetherington and Feldman, 1964)?

In all of these studies, situations were the key variable in understanding the ways in which people or a person would react to a situational variable. While it is possible to look at the entirety of the data set and come to conclusions about how journalists are using transparency on Twitter, this does not account for the events and news stories the journalists were covering and tweeting about.

By studying impactful situations which occur during the observed data collection period and then comparing those results to the overall data results, the analysis will show that journalists either:

- Tweet the exact same way during major stories being covered in the UK

- Change their tweeting style to become more or less transparent during major stories

This study examines tweets around the week of a national snap election on 8 June 2017.By analysing transparency practices around the election separately, the researcher will be able to find if transparency practices differ while reporting on events. The national election played out in individual communities provides an opportunity to study how journalists adapt their practices to the same event. The results of the situational variable analysis are in **chapter seven.**

5.7 - Qualitative Data

The qualitative section of this study is part of the mixed-methods approach discussed at the beginning of **chapter five.** The sequential design of this study means interviews were conducted after the quantitative data had been collected and analysed. The questions asked during the qualitative interviews were in-part based on the data collected from the content analysis.

The quantitative study allows the researcher to understand if, and how often journalists were using transparent practices on Twitter. The proceeding qualitative study is constructed to find the motivation of the reporters using them. The semi-structured interviews will help the researcher to explore whether transparency practices are used with the intention of building trust with users, as a part of changing journalistic practice, or as a combination of the two. The process and methods of the qualitative study will assist in answering **RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices on Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?**

5.7.1 - Qualitative data analysis - Thematic analysis

Analysing qualitative data often relies on the researcher to look for patterns and themes within a data set. This requires searching for relationships within the data to understand how patterns may fit together, and what that suggests about the data set (Kawulich, 2004).

While many techniques are available to complete a qualitative data analysis, not all are appropriate for this thesis. For example, interpretative phenomenological analysis is a type of analysis which is tied closely to a phenomenological epistemology (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The method works best to understand people's everyday experience of reality, in great detail, so as to gain an understanding of the phenomenon in question (McLeod, 2001).This was not appropriate for this study as the analysis is seeking to understand the connections to each other, not a phenomenon to explain their meaning. A Grounded Theory approach was also considered. Bernard (2000) describes the goal of grounded theory is to 'identify concepts and patterns that emerge from the text and also link concepts into substantial and formal theories,' (p. 443) which requires analysis to be directed towards theory development (Holloway & Todres, 2003). In contrast, thematic analysis is not wed to any pre-existing theoretical framework and does not require theory development (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Working in conjunction with a quantitative study, the thematic analysis will identify themes which will fit into a larger narrative of what the quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest. These outcomes will be explained in **chapter nine.**

While a popular analysis tool for qualitative studies, thematic analysis (TA) are often mislabeled or not explicitly claimed as a TA, such as discourse analysis, or even content analysis (Meehan et al, 2000). Often, thematic analysis is not identified as any particular method at all. For example, data were "subjected to qualitative analysis for commonly recurring themes" (Braun & Wilkinson, 2003: 30). If future researchers do not know how the data was analysed or what assumptions may have informed the analysis, it is difficult to replicate and verify that research (Attride-Stirling, 2001). For these reasons, clarity around process and practice of method is vital. This chapter will provide clarity around how this analysis will be undertaken.

In qualitative research, it is common to read about themes emerging from a data set. For example, a thematic discourse analysis of early menopause experiences found "several themes emerged" when analysing the data (Singer and Hunter, 1999, p.67). In another qualitative study, the methods stated that the researchers discovered 'themes and concepts' embedded in interviews (Rubin & Rubin 1995, p. 226). Language such as 'emerging' and 'discover' suggest that the process of the analysis is passive.

This passivity can be misinterpreted to mean that themes reside in the data and make themselves known to the researcher. If themes 'reside' anywhere, they reside in the minds of researchers who do the most thinking about the data and creating links as the researcher understands them (Ely et al, 1997, p.205-6). In a thematic analysis, the role of the researcher is an active one, identifying themes and selecting which ones are pertinent to the research question. Therefore, it is pertinent that the researcher acknowledges the decisions they make

when performing a qualitative analysis, and that they are recognised as decisions (Bruan &

Clarke, 2006).

The positionality of the researcher was discussed in **Chapter 1.1.** This stated the researcher for

this thesis is a journalist who has worked in local and regional newsrooms in both the USA and

the UK. Undoubtedly this will have an effect on the analysis and the identification of themes

within the data set. How themes are identified in a thematic analysis will be discussed in the

next chapter.

5.7.2 - Identifying themes

An important question to address early in a thematic analysis is what counts as a theme. The researcher can recognise a theme when information captures something important about the data set and has some level of patterned, or recurring responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The prevalence, or number of instances the theme occurs in the data set is an important factor, but not a deciding one. There is no firm answer to what proportion of data needs to have instances of the theme for it to be considered one. For example, it is not accurate to say that information cannot be a theme if it occurs within 47% of the data set, but is a theme if it occurs in 51%. A review of thematic analysis methodology shows that prevalence of themes can also be measured in a number of ways, including prevalence of a theme occuring in a whole data set, how many speakers articulated a particular theme, or by the number of occurrences of the theme in the whole data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

This thematic analysis is being undertaken to answer **RQ3 is: Do local and journalists use transparency practices of Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?** Therefore, the prevalence of themes will be considered by the number of instances of the theme occurring in each individual interview, and across the data set. Only by comparing the themes occurring in each interview, and comparing them to others, will the researcher be able to answer the research question.

Each time the researcher identifies a piece of the interview which they feel may be important to the overall data set, that section is identified as a code. A code is a meaningful section of the interview (Guest et al., 2012; Gibson & Brown, 2009). Once all interviews have been read and coded, similar codes will be grouped together. What makes these codes similar is a theme. The themes then reflect important aspects of the data set. **Figure 5.3** displays this process.

This process, known as coding, can be accomplished in two different ways, inductive or deductive. This study will utilise inductive, or 'bottoms up' approach to coding meaning that the themes will not be determined prior to the interviews and may not have specific ties to the questions asked to the reporters (Frith & Gleeson, 2004). Practically, this means the thematic analysis will be able to provide a detailed description of the data set overall, as opposed to a deductive approach to coding, which would provide detailed analysis of one interpretation of the data (Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 1997).
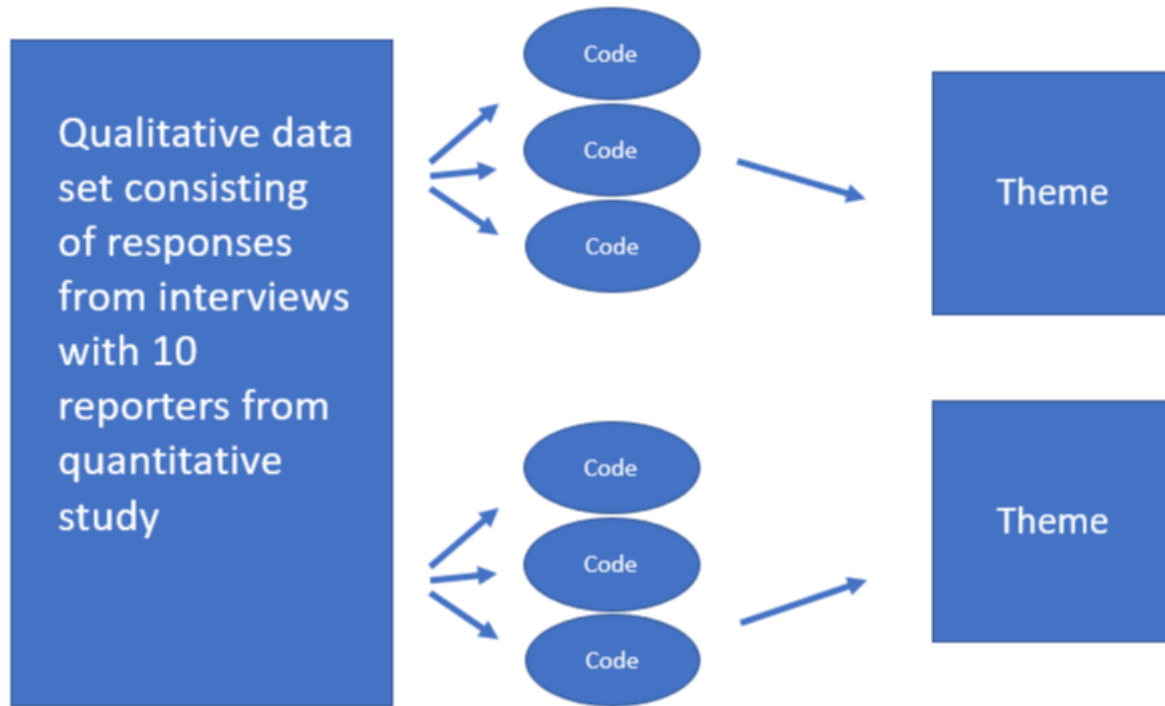
Fig 5.3 - Thematic Analysis Process

5.7.3 - Interviewing

The interviews were designed to find what motivates a journalist to use transparency on Twitter. With this research objective in mind, and with the possibility that journalists may have differing motivations, a flexible interview style is needed.

This conflicted with a need to have consistency in the questions asked in or to be able to compare how journalists reflect upon different aspects of their journalistic process. Therefore, reporters will be asked several of the same questions, and will help the researcher to be able to identify themes across the data set, using inductive coding during analysis. The need for some flexibility in the interviews to follow-up and best understand the views of the journalist, and a need for consistency in the questioning means the research will use a semi-structured approach to interviewing. Semi-structured is a term used by Berger (2016), as one of three approaches to interviewing: unstructured, semi-structured and structured. Where unstructured interviews are characterised by no prepared questions, and the opposite for structured, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to request for expanding upon an answer or exploring a theme which emerges from the interview, pertinent to inductive coding practices.

This study will ask the same questions to each of the journalists taking part in the qualitative study. Depending on the context of the conversation with the participant, wording and delivery of the questions may vary. The interviewer plans to make use of the semi-structured interview format to ask follow-up questions, based on comments from the respondent. These follow-ups

may manifest in several different ways including, probing questions, direct and indirect inquiries and asking for interpretations (Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Wahyuni, 2012). These were used not just to keep the conversation flowing, but to clarify any points the interviewee has left vague or simply to ask for more details on a line of inquiry which the interviewer does not fully understand.

The questions each journalist will be asked are:

1. How long have you been a journalist at your outlet? Overall?

2. Why do you believe your readers/viewers trust you as a journalist?

    a. Why do you believe your readers/viewers trust you as a journalist on Twitter?

3. How do you believe social media can help you build trust with your audience?

4. Do you believe your readers/viewers trust the mainstream media?

    a. Why?

5. Data from this study suggests that journalists in both print and broadcast mediums are using Twitter in order to be transparent with their audiences, why do you believe this might be?

6. Data from my study shows broadcast journalists tend to be transparent by being more open about their personal lives, while print journalists tend to be more transparent with their work lives

    a. From your experience as a journalist, do you believe this to be accurate?

        i. Why?

7. When you use transparent actions on Twitter, is your motivation to build trust with

users?

     a. If so, why do you believe this helps you?

     b. If not, what is your motivation?

8. If you altered the way you tweet, how do you believe you could influence viewers/readers to grant you more trust in your reporting?

9. Do you think there is anything you could change in the way you tweet that might help you generate more trust with audiences?

10. What, if any, outside influences contribute to your tweeting habits?

11. How does the tweeting policy laid out from your ownership group influence the way you tweet professionally? Personally?

5.7.4 - Qualitative Interviewee sample

All journalists observed in the quantitative study will be contacted via email to gauge interest in being interviewed for this study. If no response is received, follow-up calls will be made. This presents the chance for the journalist to ask any questions about involvement in the study and allows the researcher to conduct pre-interview questioning.

The reporters listed below all agreed to be interviewed and to have their identities revealed for this thesis. This was deemed important by the researcher due to the thesis stressing the importance of transparency. All were supplied with an informed consent letter detailing how information would be stored and their rights for pulling out of the study if they choose to. The journalists interviewed were:

- **Print**
  - o Brian Ellis
    - ▪ Lancashire Evening Post
    - ▪ 60 years-old
    - ▪ 40 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ General reporter
  - o Craig Johns
    - ▪ Newcastle Chronicle
    - ▪ 26 years-old
    - ▪ 4 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Sports reporter
  - o Jack Johnson
    - ▪ Oxford Mail
    - ▪ 27 years-old

- ▪ 5 years of journalism experience
- ▪ Sports reporter
- o Joel Adams
  - ▪ Brighton Argus
  - ▪ 34 years-old
  - ▪ 12 years of journalism experience
  - ▪ Government and politics reporter

- o Richard Youle
  - ▪ South Wales Evening Post
  - ▪ 45 years-old
  - ▪ 20 years of journalism experience
  - ▪ General reporter

- **Broadcast**
  - o Abbie Jones
    - ▪ BBC Northwest
    - ▪ 42 years-old
    - ▪ 25 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Reporter
  - o Ann O'Connor
    - ▪ ITV Granada
    - ▪ 49 years-old
    - ▪ 20 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Reporter
  - o Elliw Mai
    - ▪ BBC Wales
    - ▪ 30 years-old
    - ▪ 8 years of journalism experience

- ▪ Reporter
  - o Robin Britton
    - ▪ ITV Meridian
    - ▪ 56 years-old
    - ▪ 34 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Producer
  - o Stacey Poole
    - ▪ ITV Meridian
    - ▪ 46 years-old
    - ▪ 25 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Presenter

The sample provides a representation of journalists across the UK:

- 5 print and 5 broadcast journalists
- 6 men and 4 women
- 7 general reporters/presenters and 3 specialists
- 8 English and 2 Welsh
- All 5 print newsrooms represented
- 3 ITV and 2 BBC journalists

The results of the qualitative study will be discussed in **chapter eight.**

6 - Quantitative Data Results

A quantitative analysis examined Twitter output from local and regional UK reporters. The analysis utilised a three-pronged approach to answer the overall RQ; How do journalists build trust on Twitter?

Fig 6.1 - Quantitative Analysis Approach

Fig 6.1 shows the three-prong approach used to analyse the quantitative data in this study. A content analysis was used to measure prevalence of each transparency variable in the data set. This found the mean, median, and percentage of use of each transparency practice used (**fig 6.3**). A statistical significance test, the Mann-Whitney U test, was then used to calculate whether the difference in usage of transparency variables between print and broadcast reporters on Twitter, were statistically significant. Finally, the relationship between each variable and every other variable was calculated and illustrated within a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA) (Lingoes & Roskam, 1973). This was cross examined with the prevalence data to identify if there is a link between transparency practices and type of journalist (print or broadcast). Together, the results of the quantitative analysis will answer **RQ1: Is there a difference in the transparency practices used on Twitter by local and regional print and broadcast journalists in the UK?**

6.1 - Prevalence

Outlet type	Tweets	Journalists in study	Tweets/journalist
Print	**10198**	**21**	**485.6**
Broadcast	**7316**	**31**	**236**

Fig 6.2 - Tweet Prevalence

Fig 6.2 shows how print journalists tweeted more often than broadcast reporters during the collection period, over double the rate. This is despite having ten less participants in the group. The reason for, and the significance of these unbalanced groups, was detailed in **chapter 5.3.3.**

6.1.1 - Mean

Fig 6.3 shows that the mean use of live tweeting, minor opining, major opining, linking, discussion, and retweets are all higher for print journalists than they are for broadcast

journalists. However, the standard deviation of the same variables for print journalists is also high, due to the fact that print journalists tweeted significantly more often than broadcast journalists did **(Fig 6.2).**

	Medium	*N*	Mean	Median	SD	%
Live tweeting	Print	21	126.52	53	196.965	29.69
	Broadcast	31	38.65	26	42.317	16.59
Minor opining	Print	21	80.62	44	76.516	19.75
	Broadcast	31	21.13	14	32.491	8.99
Major opining	Print	21	22.86	14	27.868	6.41
	Broadcast	31	21.74	10	32.077	9.23
Linking	Print	21	50.14	28	59.126	11.55
	Broadcast	31	33.23	27	21.115	14.60
Discussion	Print	21	58.33	18	123.088	15.38
	Broadcast	31	37.26	26	32.712	15.81
Job talking	Print	21	12.48	8	12.906	3.14
	Broadcast	31	25.26	10	29.435	10.55
Personal	Print	21	20.76	12	22.596	4.91
	Broadcast	31	45.23	28	41.709	19.05
Retweets	Print	21	107.70	34	117.757	28.56
	Broadcast	31	60.71	73	77.123	38.91

Fig 6.3 - Transparency Practice Content Analysis

Print journalists highest mean use was for live tweeting ($\bar{x}$ =126.52), retweeting ($\bar{x}$ =107.70), minor opining ($\bar{x}$ =80.62), discussion ($\bar{x}$ =58.33), and linking ($\bar{x}$ =50.14). All five of these variables were used by print journalists in more than half of the journalists' tweets. Whilst for broadcast journalists, the highest mean use was for retweets ($\bar{x}$ =60.71), personal ($\bar{x}$ =45.23), live tweeting

($\bar{x}$=38.65), and discussion ($\bar{x}$=37.26). In contrast to print journalists, only one of these variables was used in more than half of the journalists' tweets.

Print journalists lowest mean use was for job talking ($\bar{x}$=12.48), personal ($\bar{x}$=20.76), and major opining ($\bar{x}$=22.86), suggesting that these are transparency practices used less frequently by journalists who belong to this medium.

Broadcast journalists lowest mean use was for minor opining ($\bar{x}$=21.15), major opining ($\bar{x}$=21.74), job talking ($\bar{x}$=25.26), and linking ($\bar{x}$=33.23).

The highest mean difference between print and broadcast journalists was found to be in their use of live tweeting (MD =87.87), minor opining (MD =59.54), and retweets (MD =46.99), suggesting that these variables were used most differently by the two mediums.

The lowest mean difference between print and broadcast journalists was found to be in their use of major opining (MD =1.12), job talking (MD =12.78), and linking (MD =16.91), suggesting that these variables were used most similarly by the two mediums.

The mean is the sum of all the values (tweets including that variable) added together, and then divided by the number of participants (journalists). In this study, print journalists tweeted significantly more frequently than broadcast journalists (higher sum of values) and there were fewer print journalists than broadcast journalists (divided by a smaller number of participants). This would naturally result in higher mean values, without reflecting if print journalists actually used the variables more often in their tweets than broadcast journalists. The mean, therefore,

cannot be used as the measure of central tendency for this data, as it does not offer a valid representation of the use of the transparency practices.

6.1.2 - Median

The median appears to offer a more valid representation of the use of variables in journalists' tweets. **Fig 6.4** shows that the median use of live tweeting, minor opining, major opining, and linking are all higher for print journalists than for broadcast journalists.

Print journalists' highest median use was for live tweeting (M = 53), minor opining (M =44), retweets (M =34), and linking (M =28). Whilst for broadcast journalists, the highest median use was for retweets (M= 73), personal (M =28), linking (M =27), live tweeting (M =26), and discussion (M =26).

	Medium	N	M*	MW**	Z	Sig
Live tweeting	Print	21	53	218.000	-2.005	.05
	Broadcast	31	26			
Minor opining	Print	21	44	83.000	-4.526	.000
	Broadcast	31	14			
Major opining	Print	21	14	314.500	-.205	.84
	Broadcast	31	10			
Linking	Print	21	28	314.500	-.205	.84
	Broadcast	31	27			
Discussion	Print	21	18	394.000	-.401	.69
	Broadcast	31	26			
Job talking	Print	21	8	235.599	-1.681	.09
	Broadcast	31	10			
Personal	Print	21	12	204.000	-2.267	.02
	Broadcast	31	28			
Retweets	Print	21	34	300.000	-.476	.63
	Broadcast	31	73			

Fig 6.4 - Transparency Practice Statistical Significance Results

*Median **Mann-Whitney U

Print journalists' lowest median use was for job talking (M =8), personal (M =12), major opining (M =14), and discussion (M =18). Broadcast lowest median use was for job talking (M =10), major opining (M =10), and minor opining (M =14).

The highest median difference between print and broadcast journalists was for retweets (39 difference), minor opining (30 difference), and live tweeting (27 difference), suggesting that these were the variables used most differently by the two mediums.

The lowest median difference between print and broadcast journalists was for linking (1 difference), job talking (2 difference), and major opining (4 difference), suggesting that these were the variables used most similarly by the two mediums.

However, it is again likely that these figures are distorted due to the significantly higher tweet rate of print journalists in comparison to broadcast. The median is the central value. If all the journalists' tweets containing the variables were listed in numerical order, the median would be the number that falls exactly in the middle of the list. Thus, the median, although offering a more adequate representation of the data than the mean, does not accurately identify if the variables were used more frequently for print journalists than for broadcast journalists.

6.1.3 - Percentage

The percentage of journalists' tweets containing the variables were also calculated in an attempt to identify which journalists were using which variables more frequently. **Fig 6.5** shows

live tweeting and minor opining were the transparency practices found to be more prevalent within print journalists' tweets (29.69% and 19.75%), compared with broadcast journalists' tweets (16.59% and 8.99%). Major opining, linking, discussion, job talking, personal and retweets were the transparency practices found to be more prevalent within broadcast journalists' tweets (9.23%, 14.60%, 15.81%, 10.55%, 19.05% and 38.91%), compared to print journalists' tweets (6.41%, 11.55%, 15.38%, 3.14%, 4.91% and 28.56%).

Variable	Print	Broadcast	Difference
Live Tweeting	**29.69%**	16.59%	10.10%
Minor Opining	**19.75%**	8.99%	10.76%
Major Opining	6.41%	**9.23%**	2.82%
Linking	11.55%	**14.60%**	3.05%
Discussion	15.38%	**15.81%**	0.43%
Job Talking	3.14%	**10.55%**	7.41%
Personal	4.91%	**19.05%**	14.14%
Retweets	28.56%	**38.91%**	10.35%

Fig 6.5 - Overall Transparency Practices Use by Percentage

The percentage of print (6.41%) and broadcast (9.23%) journalists' tweets containing major opining were very low. Job talking was also found to used very infrequently for both print (3.14%) and broadcast journalists (10.55%), as was personal (4.91%) for print journalists and minor opining (8.99%) for broadcast journalists. This implies that these transparency practices were rarely used by the journalists in this study.

The biggest difference in percentage of tweets containing the variables was found to be personal (14.14% difference). Broadcast journalists used this practice in 19.05% of their tweets, whilst print journalists only used personal in 4.91% of their tweets. Broadcast journalists also used the practice of retweets in 38.91% of their tweets, whilst print journalists used this practice in 28.56% of their tweets (10.35% difference), and job talking in 10.55% of their tweets, compared to print who used it in only 3.14% of their tweets (7.41% difference). However, print journalists used live tweeting in 29.69% of their tweets, whilst broadcast used this practice in just 16.59% of theirs (10.1% difference). Similarly, print journalists used minor opining in in their tweets 19.75% of the time, compared to broadcast journalists who used it in only 8.99% of their tweets (10.76% difference).

These results illustrate that print journalists favoured the use of minor opining and live tweeting in their tweets, whereas broadcast preferred to use personal, retweets and job talking.

The smallest difference in percentage of tweets containing the variables was found to be discussion (0.43% difference), major opining (2.82% difference), and linking (3.05). These results illustrate that print and broadcast journalists utilised these transparency practices similarly in this study.

6.2 - Significance

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine if there was a significant (p=<.005) difference between how print journalists and broadcast journalists use transparency practices on Twitter. **Fig 6.4** shows that for the transparency practices (variables) of live tweeting (p=.05),

major opining (*p*=.84), linking (*p*=.84), discussion (*p*=.69), job talking (*p*=.09), personal (*p*=.02), and retweets (*p*=.63), the Mann-Whitney U test did not find a significant difference. It is possible that the median differences found between print and broadcast journalists, in regard to the use of these transparency practices, are down to sampling error. There is not enough statistical evidence, then, to conclude that print and broadcast journalists differ in their use of these transparency practices when tweeting.

However, **fig 6.4** does show that print journalists used the transparency practice of minor opining (median = 44) in their tweets more often than broadcast journalists used the transparency practice of minor opining (median = 14) in their tweets. The Mann-Whitney U was found to be 314.5 (z = -.205) with an associated probability (significance) of .000 (*p*=.000). There is enough statistical evidence, then, to conclude that print and broadcast journalists do differ in their use of this transparency practice when tweeting.

6.3 - Relationship

The coefficient of alienation for the present study's SAA was 0.15, which indicates a very good fit for the spatial representation of the co-occurrences of the transparency practices (Willmott & Ioannou, 2017). The regional hypothesis states that transparency practices which share

associated similarities will be represented within the same region of the two-dimensional space. Therefore, those practices which do not share associated similarities will be represented within a different region of the space. The configuration of the SSA was thus examined to identify if different regions could be distinguished.
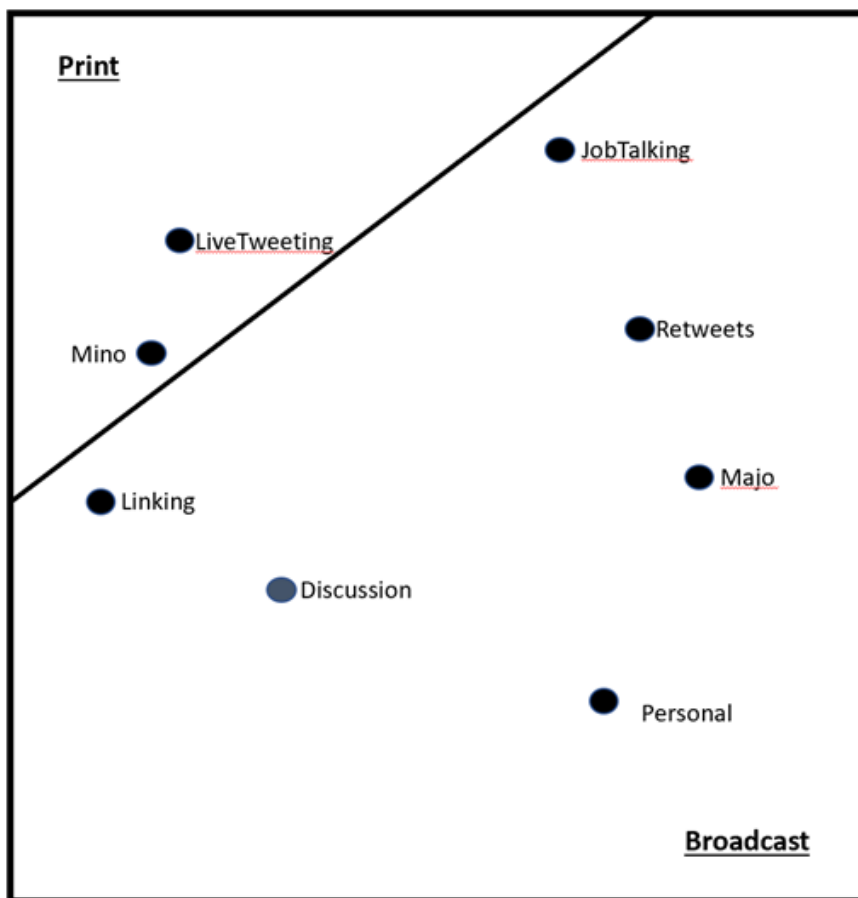
Fig 6.6 - Overall SSA Results

The boundary line for this SSA was placed based on the percentage of prevalence for each variable, as this was found to be the most representative frequency measure (**Fig 6.5**). The placement of, and therefore the association between the variables (transparency practices) within the SSA, show a distinct separation which coincides with the comparative prevalence (percentage) use of each variable. It is therefore appropriate, due to the associations illustrated

between the variables within the SSA, to suggest that there is a difference in the way print and

broadcast journalists use transparency practices on twitter.

6.3.1 - Print Journalists

The variables found to be most prevalent with print journalists were live tweeting and minor

opining, and can be observed associating closely to one another in the top left region of the

SSA, just above the boundary line. Live tweeting and minor opining are practices that focus on

facts and are primarily absent of opinion. Tweets containing these variables would be those

which aim to convey information rather than promote discussion.

This is consistent with previous research by Salzmann et al (2021) who conducted a qualitative study consisting of interviews with print journalists. The journalists said that "television journalists are more forward pushing", "more active", "more extroverted", and "better at multitasking compared to print journalists". In contrast print journalists described themselves as being "more reserved", "more comfortable to stand and work in the background", "able to focus on one thing at a time", and "having deeper reflections." This is also consistent with research by Meltzer (2009) who found that print journalists regarded themselves as "genuine craftsmen", whilst viewing tv journalists as "problem partners of the field".

6.3.2 Broadcast Journalists

The variables found to be most prevalent with broadcast journalists were major opining, linking, discussion, job talking, personal and retweets, and can be observed occupying the rest of the geometric space, underneath the boundary line. Several more variables fall on this side of the boundary line due to the consistent use of multiple types of transparency broadcast reporters used, compared to their print counterparts.

Previous research found that on Twitter, journalists are expected to meet multiple demands in order to succeed. Kumar and Mohamed Haneef (2018) suggest that journalists simultaneously need to deskill and 'en-skill', expanding new skills while unlearning ways of thinking to embrace practices on a new platform. Research has found that 'multiskilling' (Nygren, 2014; Wallace, 2013), or the use of multiple journalistic practices, is more prominent in broadcast newsrooms compared to print (Perez & Cremedas, 2014). This is consistent with broadcast journalists displaying more transparency practices consistent throughout the data set.

7 - Situational Variable Quantitative Results

The three-prong approach to analysing the data from the three-month tweet sample was applied to a subset of five days within the analysis. The tweets were sent surrounding a national snap election. Together, the results of the quantitative analysis will answer **RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?**

7.1 - Situational Variable: Prevalence

Over the five days surrounding the election, journalists in the sample tweeted 1,650 times.

Similar to results found in the overall data set, print journalists used Twitter at a higher rate

than broadcast journalists. However, **fig 7.1** shows an increased use of Twitter by broadcast

journalists.

	N	$\bar{x}$ Overall	$\bar{x}$ 5-9 June	Effect on $\bar{x}$
Print	21	5.33	6.78	+1.37
Broadcast	31	2.59	6.05	+3.46

Fig 7.1 - Situational Variable Mean Tweet Rate Comparison

7.1.1 - Mean

Fig 7.2 shows that the mean use of minor opining, major opining, linking, discussion, job talking, personal and retweets are all higher for broadcast journalists than for print journalists during the snap election. Whereas the mean use for live tweeting was higher for print journalists than it was for broadcast journalists.

	Medium	N	Mean	Election %	%	Diff %
Live tweeting	Print	21	10.38	43.44	29.69	+13.75
	Broadcast	31	6.48	21.75	16.59	+5.16
Minor opining	Print	21	13.38	57.39	19.75	+37.64
	Broadcast	31	16.03	53.61	8.99	+44.62
Major opining	Print	21	.52	1.98	6.41	-4.43
	Broadcast	31	.9	3.03	9.23	-6.20
Linking	Print	21	5.76	29.56	11.55	+18.01
	Broadcast	31	7.97	26.64	14.60	+12.04
Discussion	Print	21	2.24	8.55	15.38	-6.83
	Broadcast	31	4.55	15.24	15.81	-0.57
Job talking	Print	21	.81	5.29	3.14	+2.15
	Broadcast	31	2.23	7.42	10.55	-3.13
Personal	Print	21	1.52	8.18	4.91	+3.27
	Broadcast	31	4.35	14.55	19.05	-4.50
Retweets	Print	21	2.14	25.97	28.56	-2.59
	Broadcast	31	12.87	43.22	38.91	+4.31

Fig 7.2 - Situational Variable Transparency Practice Content Analysis

The mean use of major opining for both print and broadcast journalists was $\bar{x}$ = <1, indicating that this transparency practice was almost never used during the snap election. The mean use of job talking for print journalists was also $\bar{x}$ =<1, again indicating a severe lack of use by this medium during the election.

In contrast, print journalists' highest mean use was minor opining ($\bar{x}$ =13.38), live tweeting ($\bar{x}$ =10.38), and linking ($\bar{x}$ =5.76). While broadcast journalists' highest mean use was minor opining ($\bar{x}$ =16.03), retweets ($\bar{x}$ =12.87), and linking ($\bar{x}$ =7.97).

The mean use of discussion, job talking and personal for both mediums were $\bar{x}$ = <5, suggesting that both print and broadcast journalists avoided frequent use of these practices during the election.

The mean differences between print and broadcast journalists were largest for retweets (MD =10.73) and live tweeting (MD =3.9), illustrating that the mediums differed most in their use of these transparency practices.

The mean differences between print and broadcast journalists were smallest for job talking (MD =1.42) linking (MD =2.21), and discussion (MD =2.31), illustrating that the mediums differ less in their use of these transparency practices.

7.1.2 - Median

Fig 7.3 shows that the median use of live tweeting and minor opining were higher for print journalists than for broadcast journalists during the snap election. Whereas the median use of linking, discussion, job talking, personal and retweets were all higher for broadcast journalists than for print.

	Medium	N	M*	MW**	Z	Sig
Live tweeting	Print	21	3.00	241.000	-1.649	.099
	Broadcast	31	.00			
Minor opining	Print	21	8.00	315.500	-.187	.852
	Broadcast	31	7.00			
Major opining	Print	21	.00	293.000	-.730	.465
	Broadcast	31	.00			
Linking	Print	21	4.00	264.500	-1.151	.250
	Broadcast	31	5.00			
Discussion	Print	21	1.00	271.000	-1.041	.298
	Broadcast	31	4.00			
Job talking	Print	21	.00	238.000	-1.717	.086
	Broadcast	31	1.00			
Personal	Print	21	.00	164.000	-3.100	.002
	Broadcast	31	3.00			
Retweets	Print	21	1.00	153.500	-3.238	.001
	Broadcast	31	6.00			

Fig 7.3 Situational Variable Statistical Significance Results

The median use of major opining for both print and broadcast journalists was M =0.00, indicating that this transparency practice was not used by either medium during the snap election. The median use of job talking and personal for print journalists, and live tweeting for broadcast was also M =0.00, again indicating a complete lack of use of these transparency practices by journalists during the election.

Print journalists' highest median use was for minor opining (M =8), linking (M =4), and live tweeting (M =3). Whilst broadcast journalists highest median use was for minor opining (M =7), retweets (M =6), and linking (M =5).

Print journalists' median use of retweet (M =1) and discussion (M =1) suggests that this was a transparency practice rarely used by this medium during the election. Similarly, the median use of job talking (M =1) for broadcast journalists suggests that this was a transparency practice rarely used by this medium during the election.

The median differences between print and broadcast journalists were largest for retweets (5 difference), live tweeting (3 difference), discussion (3 difference), and personal (3 difference), illustrating that the mediums differed most in their use of these transparency practices.

The median differences between print and broadcast journalists were smallest for job talking (1 difference) linking (1 difference), and minor opining (1 difference), illustrating that the mediums differ less in their use of these transparency practices.

7.1.3 - Percentages

The percentage of journalists' tweets containing the variables were also calculated during the snap election, in an attempt to identify which journalists were using which variables more frequently (**fig 7.2**).

Live tweeting (43.3%), minor opining (57.3%) and linking (29.5%) were the transparency practices found to be more prevalent within print journalists' tweets, compared with broadcast journalists' tweets (21.7%, 53.6% and 26.6%). Major opining (3.0%), discussion (15.2%), job

talking (7.4%), personal (14.5%) and retweets (43.0%) were the transparency practices found to be more prevalent within broadcast journalists' tweets, compared to print journalists' tweets (1.9%, 8.5%, 5.2%, 8.1%, and 25.9%).

The percentage of print (1.9%) and broadcast (3.0%) journalists' tweets containing major opining were extremely low. Job talking was also found to used very infrequently for both print (5.2%) and broadcast journalists (7.4%), as was personal (8.1%) and discussion (8.5%), but only for print journalists. This implies that these transparency practices were rarely used during the election.

The biggest difference in percentage of tweets during the election, which contained the variables, was found to be live tweeting. Print journalists used this practice in 43.4% of their tweets, whilst broadcast journalists only used live tweeting in 21.7% of their tweets, exactly half the amount (21.7% difference). However, broadcast journalists used the practice of retweets in 43.0% of their tweets during the election, whilst print journalists only used this practice in 25.9% of their tweets (17.1% difference). These results illustrate that print and broadcast journalists differed most in their use of these two variables during the election.

The smallest difference in percentage of tweets during the election, which contained the variables, was found to be major opining (1.1% difference) and job talking (2.2% difference). These results illustrate that print and broadcast journalists differed least in their use of these two variables during the election.

7.2 - Significance

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine if there was a significant (p=<.005) difference between how print journalists and broadcast journalists used transparency practices on Twitter, during the snap election. **Fig 7.3** shows that for the transparency practices (variables) of live tweeting (p=.099), minor opining (p=.852), major opining (p=.465), linking (p=.250), discussion (p=.298), and job talking (p=.086), the Mann-Whitney U test did not find a significant difference. Therefore, there is not enough statistical evidence to conclude that print and broadcast journalists differ in their use of these transparency practices when tweeting.

However, **fig 7.3** does show that broadcast journalists used the transparency practice of personal (M =3.00) and retweets (M =6.00) in their tweets more often than print journalists used the transparency practice of personal (M =.00) and retweets (M =1.00) in their tweets. The Mann-Whitney U was found to be 164 (z = -3.100) for personal with an associated probability (significance) of .002 (p=.002), and 153.5 (z =-3.238) for retweets with an associated probability (significance) of .001 (p=.001).There is enough statistical evidence, then, to conclude that print and broadcast journalists did differ in their use of these two transparency practices when tweeting during the election.

7.3 - Relationship

The coefficient of alienation for the present study's SAA was 0.15, which indicates a very good fit for the spatial representation of the co-occurrences of the transparency practices (Willmott & Ioannou, 2017). **Fig 7.4** shows the relationship between the transparency practices used from 5-9 June 2017.

Fig 7.4 - Situational Variable SSA Results

The boundary line for this SSA was placed based on the percentage of prevalence for each variable, as this was found to be the most representative frequency measure (**fig 7.5**). The placement of, and therefore the association between the variables (transparency practices) within the SSA, show a distinct separation which coincides with the prevalence (percentage) of use of each variable. It is therefore appropriate, due to the associations illustrated between the variables within the SSA, to suggest that there is a difference in the way print and broadcast journalists use transparency practices on Twitter.

Variable	Print	Broadcast	Difference
Live Tweeting	**43.40%**	21.70%	21.70%
Minor Opining	**57.30%**	53.60%	3.70%
Major Opining	1.90%	**3.0%**	1.10%
Linking	**29.50%**	26.60%	2.90%
Discussion	8.50%	**15.20%**	6.70%
Job Talking	5.20%	**7.40%**	2.20%
Personal	8.10%	**14.50%**	6.40%
Retweets	25.90%	**43.00%**	17.20%

Fig 7.5 - Situational Variable Transparency Practices Use by Percentage

7.3.1 - Print Journalists

The variables found to be most prevalent with print journalists were live tweeting, minor opining, and linking, which can be observed associating closely to one another in the left region of the SSA, just left of the boundary line. These practices are similar to the results found in the overall data set. The transparency practices print journalists used during an election are still primarily about reporting and validation of information through one-way communication. Print journalists used linking at a higher rate than in the original data set during the election. These links were often connecting followers with incoming results, or content created by colleagues at their own outlet.

7.3.2 - Broadcast Journalists

The variables found to be most prevalent with broadcast journalists were major opining, discussion, job talking, personal and retweets, and can be observed occupying the right of the geometric space, just right of the boundary line. These results are largely consistent with what was found in the overall data set. Broadcast reporters used a wider variety of transparency practices, with a greater prevalence, than those working for print newsrooms.

8 - Qualitative interviews

The data and results of the quantitative study allowed the researcher to understand the

prevalence of transparency usage on Twitter by local and regional reporters in the UK. Discussed

in **chapters 6 and 7,** the analyses highlighted differences in between and among how print and

broadcast journalists use transparency on Twitter. The quantitative data does not provide

reasons why journalists are tweeting this way. The sequential design of this study allowed the

researcher to conduct semi-structured interviews to explore whether transparency practices are

used with the intention of building trust with users, as a part of changing journalistic practice, or

as a combination of the two. This was done to answer **RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices of Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?**

Several themes were identified by the researcher pertaining to reporters' motivations to use transparency on Twitter. **Chapter 8.1** discusses that 6 out of the 10 interviewees were unaware that Twitter content contained transparency practices. This lack of awareness around the concept of transparency in reporting means intent to build trust with these practices may be low.

While transparency may not be universally used with the intention of trust building, it is a particular motivation amongst many. **Chapters 8.2-8.2.2** analyse the answers given by the journalists which illustrate several motivations reporters have for using transparency on Twitter:

- Building trust and personal relationships

- Direct communication

- Brand building

Chapter 8.3 discusses a theme of responses about how Twitter use is a professional expectation, but training by employers on best practices is inconsistent or non-existent. This may have an impact on journalistic output, and motivation to use transparency consistently. Ultimately, many of the reporters identified one practice which marked what they were willing to share and withhold on Twitter, personal information. Discussed in **Chapter 8.4,** some see the sharing of personal details as an important part of interacting with followers, while others

believe it is possible to show personality, without having to disclose every action taken in real

life.

 These themes were identified in the data set either between print and broadcast reporters, or

within each group. How these themes were identified is discussed throughout this chapter.

Excerpts and quotes from the interviews will be used in order to validate each theme and prove

that the responses, as well as the themes are not anomalies, but valid themes with qualitative

data to support each.

The qualitative study is based on the semi-structured interviews of ten journalists, all of whom

were observed for the quantitative study. They were:

- **Print**
  - Brian Ellis
    - Lancashire Evening Post
    - 60 years-old
    - 40 years of journalism experience
    - General reporter
  - Craig Johns
    - Newcastle Chronicle
    - 26 years-old
    - 4 years of journalism experience
    - Sports reporter
  - Jack Johnson
    - Oxford Mail
    - 27 years-old
    - 5 years of journalism experience
    - Sports reporter
  - Joel Adams
    - Brighton Argus
    - 34 years-old
    - 12 years of journalism experience

- ▪ Government and politics reporter

  - o Richard Youle
    - ▪ South Wales Evening Post
    - ▪ 45 years-old
    - ▪ 20 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ General reporter

- **Broadcast**
  - o Abbie Jones
    - ▪ BBC Northwest
    - ▪ 42 years-old
    - ▪ 25 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Reporter
  - o Ann O'Connor
    - ▪ ITV Granada
    - ▪ 49 years-old
    - ▪ 20 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Reporter
  - o Elliw Mai
    - ▪ BBC Wales
    - ▪ 30 years-old
    - ▪ 8 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Reporter
  - o Robin Britton
    - ▪ ITV Meridian
    - ▪ 56 years-old
    - ▪ 34 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Producer
  - o Stacey Poole
    - ▪ ITV Meridian
    - ▪ 46 years-old
    - ▪ 25 years of journalism experience
    - ▪ Presenter

The sample provides a representation of journalists across the UK:

- 5 print and 5 broadcast journalists

- 6 men and 4 women

- 7 general reporters/presenters and 3 specialists

- 8 English and 2 Welsh

- All 5 print newsrooms represented
- 3 ITV and 2 BBC journalists

8.1 - Awareness of transparency use

During the interviews, not all journalists were aware of their own transparency use of Twitter. Four for the ten interviewees said they knew they used elements of transparency on Twitter, while two were unaware they had used transparency at all in their Twitter practice.

Richard Youle: *"I know I try to be a transparent person and a transparent journalist. On Twitter, I just try to tell people what I know, and because I have some space, how I know it."*

Elliw Mai: *"I think pushing out material is my primary focus on Twitter. But if something warrants a reply, I won't hesitate. If somebody asks for more information on something and I have it and know it's correct, I will share it. For example, a colleague will sometimes interact*

with a Tweet, I won't hesitate to add to that either. It may not be because I am trying to be transparent. It's just what I do."

Abbie Jones: *"It's my job. It's nothing more or less than that. I'm a news journalist. I'm there to break the news and tell people about it as fast as possible. That's how I use Twitter and that's what I use it for. It's the fastest medium in order to show people information and what is going on at the scene or at ground level. If there is some big breaking story, people are doing searches about Manchester Bomb and finding out what is going on now. I want to show that to them as fast as possible."*

Ann O'Connor: *"It is the purest form of what we do. Here I am, look at it. There is no corporate side to it, there's no other influences. It's here it is, this is the fire, here is the crash, here is the murder scene, here is the council meeting, look it at. I think this is one of the best uses of Twitter, you can really get stuff out there. I loved working in radio before coming to TV because it was so immediate and so quick. Twitter is one of those fantastic tools as a journalist. You can literally get out of the car and show people what is going on."*

Consistently reporters talked about their transparency use as pragmatic decisions. These practices have become normalised in the field to a point that the actions do not seem extraordinary or something even worth labelling. Using transparency on Twitter is just a part of doing the job.

This is exemplified when journalists discussed the importance of communicating with audiences on Twitter. Though not consistently seen as 'transparency,' maintaining conversation with followers was seen as a vital use of Twitter due to the ability to connect directly with the people reporters are responsible for covering news for. Communication on Twitter is direct and instant and allows the journalist to build relationships and trust directly:

Jack Johnson: *"I'll be open and honest with people. I'm a private person but if someone asks me a question or says you've made an error here I don't mind owning up to it and changing it straight away. I think that way you gain more respect from people rather than hiding away and pretending it hasn't happened. In terms of transparency, I don't know any other way in all honesty. That's the way I've always gone about things and that's how I'll continue."*

Richard Youle: *"I think it's* (direct Twitter communication) *important because there seems to be a lot of non-transparent stuff out there which is perhaps focusing the issue on what are people reading, where is it coming from, who is writing it, what is it trying to do. I guess it has always been the case since when people can use a printing press but maybe it's changed due to the absolute deluge of information coming out every day. And it's a fair question of who is behind it and what they are trying to achieve, giving transparency a lot more cache."*

Joel Adams: *"I think it's an implicit responsibility. Twitter is a conversation forum, a newspaper website is not. In a newspaper website, I went out, I did the work I've written this story, published it and if you want to waffle on and argue beneath the line, go on, but I have other shit*

to do. But if I've tweeted something, particularly if it's a bit sly or point scoring I think it would be cowardly to not interact with the tweet. Most of the time, my tweets will divide opinion. I think it's quite unusual. I think it's rare for me to tweet something which is blandly factual. It will be my opinion and by definition people won't agree. If you think yourself above that, or aloof from those who want to interact with you, it is your responsibility to interact with them after making a claim. So I think tweeting carries with it an implicit responsibility to engage with people who engage with you."

Journalists appear to have an awareness of transparency as a concept, but do not consistently identify particular actions or practices as transparent. Instead they are seen as part of normal journalistic practice, or pragmatic uses for the social media platform. Despite the contradiction, journalists were able to identify the reasons why incorporating transparent actions into their work habits is important. These reasons are discussed in the following chapter.

8.2 - Why use transparency?

Throughout the interviews, reporters identified their motivations for using Twitter. This often

led to a discussion about their specific actions on Twitter. As the previous chapter highlighted,

not all journalists perceived their own actions as transparent. Instead, conversations would

often center around what the journalists were trying to achieve when using Twitter. The most

prominent themes included :

- Building trust / relationships with users

- Brand building

    - Personal or professional

While these were the most prevalent, to view the themes as completely independent to one

another would be inaccurate. Reporters often linked brand building and building trust as one

action. Throughout this chapter, the researcher will attempt to separate these uses for Twitter,

while also explaining how the themes within the data are linked.

8.2.1 - Building trust and relationships with users

The most prevalent theme throughout the interviews was about building trust. All reporters spoke about the skill of building trust with news consumers. Specifically, how it has changed since the onset of social media, and continues to evolve as social media has become a permanent part of the job for local and regional journalists. One of the main reasons journalists cited for the difficult task of building trust with their readers and viewers is the simple act of having to build up trust over time, on a platform which encourages speed. Craig Johns and Richard Youle, both print reporters, remarked how consistency in reporting and social media presence is how trust is gained in modern local and regional journalism in the UK.

Craig Johns: *"It's (trust) about building that trust over time. One of the things we've had to deal with in the last couple years is the way things are changing in the industry. It's been quite a new thing in modern journalism for us. Another news outlet reports a transfer rumour that you didn't understand to be true, you'd kind of ignore it. Today, online, with the way things are, you can't ignore it. Over time, it's about being on top of things. If someone reports something, you check*

it out and give as much information to your readers as you possibly can. And I think over time, readers will come to trust you as a reliable news source."

Richard Youle: *"I guess trust comes after you build up a bit of a track record of writing stories that are as accurate as they can be. That encourages people to be interested in what you're writing and to trust you."*

Others explained that they did not think that building trust between reporter and audience was more difficult now than before, but far more emphasis is placed on it. Reasons mentioned for this include increased 1-2-1 communication between audiences and journalists, and the expectations of audiences changing. Due to the amount of time spent on smartphones and social media platforms, audiences are getting their news from social media feeds. This suggests journalists must be there, or risk becoming irrelevant. Jack Johnson believes his Twitter use is partly motivated by wanting to prove that he is worth trusting.

Jack Johnson: *"I think a lot comes down to showing that we are still here. Anyone can say they are a news reporter nowadays. But if I am taking photos, posting them to Twitter, getting quotes from people who were there... It just shows that I am a more reliable source. So we are trying to dig our elbows in and say we (journalists) are still here, trust us WE are who you should be following.*

Without going overboard, you wanna show that you are a trustworthy source yourself. If I'm telling people I got this from x, I got this from y, people are more likely to trust those tweets and see me as a reliable source, rather than another source which doesn't."

The motivation to use Twitter in this way was more common from younger journalists. For example, Elliw Mai, a 30-year-old broadcast reporter at BBC Wales, views Twitter as a place for a reporter to be a source of news, but to be a person. She does not see much difference between her life on Twitter, and her life off of it. To Elliw, they should reflect the same image: a trustworthy, reliable, rounded, real person.

Elliw Mai: *"I think if you look at my Twitter, you see who I am. I feel that in this day in age, if I were to go for a job, or even in my personal life, people look at your Twitter profile and you want to make sure you are giving an accurate portrayal of yourself. I think it is important to be honest and transparent and quite up front on there, personally and professionally. This helps people get a sense of whether they can trust me."*

These views of how to use Twitter as a journalist are not universal. Responses from reporters in older generations suggest that the age of a reporter can impact on how they may choose to use the platform. Three of the broadcast journalists interviewed were women, all in their 40's. Each has over 20 years of experience in journalism and all reported similar views about their Twitter use: it is a professional, reporting tool, nothing more.

Abbie Jones: *"Social media is already confusing enough with the mix of opinions and news all together. So I stick to facts, as I see them. I'm not going to try to make friends on Twitter. It's not how I do things. I never tweet about my home life. I'm not that kind of person. The kinds of things I tweet about, especially with investigations, they are things you can believe because they have been properly researched. As a journalist, I think we owe that to our followers to tweet what is factual. "*

Ann O'Connor: *"I tend not to tweet my opinions very much. I tweet things I think are amusing or funny but I also tweet the news, not what I think about the news. If I am in court, I will tweet about the case, if I am out doing an art, feature story, I will tweet about that. I will not tweet about what I think about things."*

Stacey Poole: *"I do a lot of very factual tweets. I don't think my tweets are very personal, they are about a news story that they can read elsewhere, that they can see as factual. Therefore, I think generally, I tweet the believable, not the sensational. They are not necessarily opinion and so therefore more trustworthy than those who offer more personal opinion and comment."*

There are varied responses to **RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices of Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?** Age appears to be a factor in answering that question. However, brand building was a theme broached by all interviewees. While their actions on Twitter may not be deliberately transparent to build trust, actions do appear to be

deliberate to build a brand on Twitter. And it is the hope that users will trust in the brand. The next chapter will explain this relationship further.

8.2.2 - Brand building on Twitter

The role of building trust as an individual brand on Twitter was discussed with all of the reporters. Research in **chapters 2.1.1 - 2.1.4** highlights the changing journalistic practices journalists have been undertaking since Twitter became available. Fundamentally, social media and blogging platforms changed the way journalists could build trust with their followers. Prior to social media platforms, journalists promoted the brand they work for, in hopes that a historic title that has been in the community for decades will afford the journalist trust (Choudhury, 2014; Lau & Lee, 1999).

On social media, journalists are able to promote themselves as a brand. With the ability to communicate directly with users, reporters can create a brand around their name and promote trust in that brand, rather than who they work for (Alejandro, 2010; Huang, 2014). Crucially, this brand can be designed in several different ways. The decisions reporters make about how to

represent that brand directly impacts how they are viewed by audiences. In the interviews, all reporters said they were aware of this connection. What varied was how much, if at all, they cared about improving the image of their individual brand.

Three print reporters, Richard Youle, Jack Johnson and Brian Ellis, believe that brands are meant to be built and utilised by companies and organisations, not individual journalists:

Brian Ellis: *"I will use Twitter to build the reach of the brand of the newspaper, or retweet the work of my colleagues, but it has never been about my brand because my brand as a journalist is pretty well hidden. Even when I was freelancing, I was pushing the brand of other people and getting people to believe in their brand."*

Richard Youle: *"It's not something that interests me. Brands are for big companies, not for individual journalists unless you're really somebody really well-read and an author as well. It's not something that interests me."*

Jack Johnson: *"Twitter is the only way they would find out things or hear anything from me. I'm not that important. I would just see it as a way of portraying myself in the best light. I don't want to be seen as a clown on Twitter or be particularly outspoken. All I want to do is provide people with an informative account that they can trust and enjoy."*

The word 'brand' seemed to conjure up the idea of being very outspoken on Twitter and sharing personal information consistently, much like an actor, musician or celebrity may use Twitter and Instagram. This connotation with the word 'brand' appeared to make the interviewed local and regional journalists reluctant to say they would be motivated to build their brand on Twitter in order to build a following or gain trust with their followers. However, three journalists in particular remarked that while they did not want to build a 'brand' in the way of disclosing all aspects of their personal lives, they did still want to build a brand. A brand which made people think of accurate, insightful reporting:

Abbie Jones: *"I tweet about things that are newsworthy, accurate, hard to refute. That is my brand. I want my brand to be a trusted source of news. Not anything else. When people see my name, I want them to think the tweet next to it can be trusted and is accurate, timely news."*

Ann O'Connor: *"When the user is scrolling through their Twitter timeline, they see a hundred posts but then they see Ann O'Connor come up and they know what to expect. I have no interest in being anything other than impartial and informative. I have no interest in people knowing more about me as a person or a reporter. I just want to tell people what is happening."*

Joel Adams: *"When my name comes up on a Twitter feed, I want them to think either: What interesting event is he bringing to my attention or has a take on, or what news story has he covered that he is bringing to my attention…I think they have a good sense of who Joel Adams, reporter is on my Twitter and that is what they have a right to be interested in. I have no idea if*

Bob Woodward is gay, straight, married or enjoys jalapeño poppers and I don't care. I don't care really how many followers I have. I find it mildly amusing when my followers increase because I think that the more impact and influence I have, the better reporter I can be… What I'm doing on Twitter is either putting out information to people who are wondering what Joel Adams is up to today or much more likely, people who follow me and are interested in the goings on in Brighton. I won't attract their attention by, metaphorically, standing on a street corner shouting go to the website, and I don't have that kind of reach. But I can reach a number of people by tweeting directly about a particular thing at that meeting."

The choices which reporters make about impartiality, gatekeeping and providing accountability determine how a reporter shows transparency on Twitter (Lasorsa, 2012). The responses illustrate that there is inconsistency in how Twitter is viewed and used by reporters**.** As identified in the interviews, this could be explained through inconsistent training and importance placed on using the platform in newsrooms around the UK. This theme is discussed in the next chapter.

8.3 - Professional Expectations

All of the reporters either said or confirmed that using Twitter was an expectation at the outlet they worked for. However, the amount of support they receive to know how to use the platform and excel in communicating with it is minimal, and in some places, not existent.

The experiences of reporters varied greatly. Due to the use of Twitter as an expectation of the job, rather than a choice, the thematic analysis identified various amounts of commitment to using or learning about the platform. For example, broadcast reporter Stacey Poole said she never received any training, even for basic skills. She believes that her lack of Twitter knowledge may be holding her back from reaching her full potential in communicating with audiences:

Stacey Poole: *"It took me quite a while to start using it consistently. Literally, I have never had any training on it whatsoever. Even now, I have no idea how it works if I'm being honest. I have*

no idea how you get followers, how you get people to trust you. I literally just tweet but I have no idea why or what I'm doing. (Laughs). I'm just replying to people who write to me. That's just how I do it, which is probably not the way you're meant to do it."

Later in the interview, Poole mentions that she could seek out training if she wanted to, but with not being particularly interested in social media use outside of work commitments, it seemed like a waste of time.- In turn, this had an effect on her commitment to use the platform and interact with followers. Oxford Mail reporter Jack Johnson agreed that a lack of training, coupled with the emphasis of use from management, meant slow progress and varied tactics.

Jack Johnson: *"You start off with no followers and how do you develop from there? I've got about 500 and it could be a lot better, it could be a lot worse. It's a bit of a struggle, I started off not knowing anything about how to use the platform. I think I'm getting better with that as I learn but I have become more comfortable with it. I've become more comfortable and informal with it. Not all the time but I have become much much comfortable expressing my opinion, especially my fandoms. I've learned a lot about how to be more of a person on Twitter. Little tweaks like that to show. And to show my face out there a lot."*

Johnson noted that he took extra time to learn how other reporters are using Twitter to find if their output was as effective as his own. However, this extra care was not universal across the sample. Abbie Jones, broadcast reporter for BBCNW believes that even with social media

training, the working patterns of a regional reporter is simply too full to not just learn how to use Twitter more effectively, but to incorporate into daily patterns of work.

Abbie Jones: *"I have a lot that I have to juggle. I'm of the generation where when I started, I didn't even have a mobile phone. You got your story and you went out and did it. I've embraced technology. I shoot all my own stuff and edit it all, but there is a limit to it. Sometimes I forget to tweet about a story and I get to 1030 and I haven't tweeted all day. You just run out of time."*

These two factors could contribute to the wide variance seen in how journalists use transparency on Twitter: age and time. Reporters who started working in newsrooms before social media was a part of normal working procedure find it difficult to prioritise in their reporting. 49 year-old broadcast reporter Ann O'Connor agrees. Without being offered training, the ITV Meridian journalist observes the work of other journalists on Twitter, especially national ones, and attempts to emulate what she deems effective:

Ann O'Connor: *"I try to make things concise and if in some way amusing or eye-catching. There are tweets that stick with you forever. It's clever and its brilliant in the way it's been done. And you hope your own feed isn't dull. I like mine to be lively. I'm not interested in telling what my opinion is on everything. I just want to show people quirky and interesting things."*

Looking to emulate national journalists contradicts the research of Hanusch (2014) discussed in **chapter 4.2.2.** That study found local and national journalists hold different values because their

output is different. The comments here suggest that Twitter may be a common ground for reporters, and in the absence of training, journalists are learning new practices from observing one another on Twitter. However, even with training, Newcastle Evening Chronicle sports reporter, Craig Johns, believes that common sense is still needed when using social media in a professional capacity, especially when communicating with audiences or tweeting something potentially controversial:

Craig Johns*: "We had a training, and things like that where we are told things that will work on Twitter and things that won't work on Twitter and things that are good practices, if you like, things like that. There aren't any policies as such as what you should or shouldn't tweet because officially, that Twitter account is our personal Twitter account and not the companies. But you also have to employ a bit of commonsense. You aren't going to tweet rubbish, something like a really controversial view. Stay away from that, it's just common sense. Different people have different views and it's a hot topic. Certainly, just stay clear of things like that."*

Reporters in this study are subjected to varying amounts of training for Twitter use. This could account for the very different rates at which journalists tweet, how they tweet, how they use transparency and what they tweet about. This likely had a direct impact on the results of the quantitative study, contributing to journalists using social media in many different ways as they are all using differing techniques.

8.4 - Personal Transparency

To disclose personal information online is a choice that nearly every journalist in the UK faces every day. Some, as will be illustrated in this chapter, have a staunch no personal information on Twitter policy, making the choice easy. Others show their personality through what they tweet about, especially using humour, while not showing every coffee and avocado on toast they consume. Research discussed in **chapters 3-4** discussed that sharing personal information can have an impact on the trust afforded to the journalist by the public. Consumers want to know more about the person supplying information Followers, we crave knowing that we are not just following a robot, but an actual person with original thoughts and feelings (Jahng & Littau, 2015; Kwak et al., 2009; Graham, 2015).

Yet, despite the research, some journalists, both print and broadcast believe that sharing personal lives on Twitter is a waste of time:

Abbie Jones: *"I don't put my personal life on Twitter because I don't want anyone knowing about my family. Doing investigations, I've got to be careful. I've never had problems but*

somebody I know doing similar work had their car fire bombed. I'm not saying I'm at that level or doing anything that serious but I don't want anyone knowing where I live. I don't put anything about my child on Twitter. It's more of a work account because I don't go on there to chat or talk about my daily life, or TV programmes. I suppose it comes down to what kind of figure you are. If I did put stuff about my personal life, I'd probably get a bit more followers. Twitter is a tool for my job, but that's where it is. It's not something I do in my spare time."

Jack Johnson: *"I'm a private person. I don't like people knowing too much about me. I don't feel the need to let the world know what I'm doing or what I'm eating, whether I'm watching the world cup. I keep it just about what I'm writing about. I think that says a lot about me and because if I'm putting it on Twitter, it means I'm proud of it, that's my work. I just don't feel the need to tweet about my personal life. I know a few of my colleagues on the sport desk do, but I'm not really into that. I quite happily tweet about my work, go home and no one will hear from me again until work starts at 9 in the morning."*

Johnson and Jones want to keep their privacy. That is their motivation for keeping their personal lives off of Twitter. Just as with every Twitter user, some will be more prone to sharing personal information than others. However, for some journalists, the lack of personal information being shared on Twitter appears to be motivated by not wanting to upset the followers they have. Craig Johns and Joel Adams said during their interviews that they have worked to craft a theme of professionalism around their Twitter timelines and to tweet non-professionally would be a disservice to the followers:

Craig Johns: *"I tend not to post a lot about me, about my personal life on Twitter. It's about my life as a journalist, about work and promoting my work. With Twitter, I try to keep professional. I don't know if people would respect you or not more. Twitter is an interesting place. People will happily use Twitter as a normal social thing as you would Facebook but there are a lot of people on there that just want their football news, especially the people that follow me. I'm not sure they are interested in learning about my personal life."*

Joel Adams: *"I don't see why anybody should give a fuck about my life. I think it would be insulting to my followers to tell them what I had for breakfast or whether I enjoyed my date last night. I don't believe that's why they follow me. It's none of their business and I don't really understand why anybody cares about what anybody had for breakfast. I think it would undermine what I use Twitter for if that's what was coming across people's feeds when they saw my name. If you told me that by tweeting that I had crushed avocado on toast in the morning, I could increase my followers two fold, I still wouldn't do it."*

Motivations not to use Twitter for sharing personal information are all different and personal to each journalist. However, the qualitative interviews did reveal that some journalists believe showing personality is reasonable to do on Twitter, while sharing what the journalists is doing, eating, etc, may not be:

Robin Britton: *"I don't share a lot about my personal life. Occasionally, but I don't think people are that interested in me. They might be interested in the stories I share with them but are they interested in my life from last night, I don't think so. But I do think there are people in television who have a contrary view to me. They think people are interested in every cough and spit they have and those people should have a reality check. They should look at the traffic they are getting on their posts.*

That being said, I occasionally (said in a sarcastic manner) have a go at Nigel Farage to remind people that he's stood for parliament 7 times and never been elected and he said in the week before the Brexit referendum that if remain were to 'just' win, he was in favour of a second referendum. I think things like that are fair game to point out."

Ann O'Connor: *"I tend not to tweet what I've been eating and where I've been on holiday. Possibly you show your personality through your taste. What you like, what bands you like. Like a person, you RT people. I won't talk about my kids online and I try not to say where I live. I think broadcasters are just more used to people seeing them and knowing what their sense of humour might be. Print journalists are a bit more traditional in the fact that they don't seem themselves as the story."*

Brain Ellis: *"In our job, humour doesn't exist in the same quantity it did in newspapers. Today it's humorless in papers and I think with Twitter particularly you can have a bit of a laugh with current events. I remember once I read a comment. I had been to a football match, Preston against Newcastle. Newcastle had won but were very, very lucky and I put that on Twitter that*

evening. And the tirade that it put from hundreds of Newcastle fans was astonishing and that taught me early on a lesson. Not to do things like that. To think a bit more in the future. I tried to be a bit jocular about it but I made a point that they were lucky to get three points. It's made me think about the wider audience and exposure a tweet can get after retweets and favourites."

Richard Youle: *"Personally, I don't think it's hugely important. I can see why people would want more of that and see what your sense of humour is about. If I read another journalist, I'm not really concerned with what they are all about but if they are really good I'll follow them."*

Joel Adams: *"I was influenced by good reporters and the way they write and the way they tweet. Most reputable print journalists don't tweet about personal things. They might send personal tweets but they don't tweet about personal things. Print reporters particularly might tweet, "Great result by Brighton this afternoon." Or "What fantastic to be at Amex for 2-1 win over Man U" But they wouldn't tweet "God, adulting is hard sometimes, I'm fighting with my landlord about the shower." Younger reporters and broadcast reporters and online only reporters and more female reporters in my experience are more comfortable tweeting those personal details and have just grown up in a world where you just put stuff online in an unfiltered way."*

Showing personality and a sense of humour appears to be a popular way in which both print and broadcast local and regional journalists in the UK are attempting to show a bit of themselves, without the perhaps uncomfortable task of sharing personal details about family,

home life and time away from the job. However, as Stacey Poole shared, sharing personal information online is always a risk for journalists, no matter how much is being shared. She began by explaining that she had a fairly liberal attitude towards Twitter and often used it to communicate with audiences and share what was happening with her day. Below is a short excerpt from the interview the researcher had with Poole:

Stacey Poole: "*Well, I always thought this would be a good way of communicating with viewers and that's what I thought I was doing when I was replying. They would say, that was a great story or I enjoyed watching you. I felt compelled that if they tweeted to me that I should reply, I thought what's the point of me being on there if I'm not going to reply? It seems like a pretty pointless platform if you aren't going to respond to anyone. I did reply to a lot of people.*

Some of them became quite persistent and it turned out they weren't necessarily viewers. They were people out of our geographical region. And were then tuning into their Sky Box to tune into the station I was on and then found me on Twitter. And that is what became problematic. People started to become a bit obsessed because they feel like they have an in to you. If you're on TV and not on Twitter, people have no way of communicating with you, really. But it's a very easy way to communicate and make your feelings quite clear on Twitter. And I found that people became slightly aggressive. 3 in particular.

TU: (researcher): *3 in the past year?*

SP: *Yeah.*

TU: *Wow.*

SP: *And like, really persistent. Calling me in the newsroom after every bulletin, saying I know where you are, police are involved, sending emails because I'm not replying to tweets, communicating with the head of ITV."*

This ordeal of dealing with three stalkers stemming from Twitter has forced Poole to almost completely abandon her Twitter use for anything other than purely professional, news-based tweets. She explains that while her employers understand the circumstances of why she is not using social media platforms now, they were the ones who encouraged her to use Twitter in the first place, putting her in potential danger:

Stacey Poole: *"I was told to be on Twitter by ITV. We were told we needed to generate a profile. For me, it becomes, do you generate a profile at the cost of feeling insecure and nervous and slightly vulnerable? At what point do you cross the line? I just felt that crossed the line for me when people start to ring the newsroom and say I know you're there.*

I've stopped doing any social media. I've stopped doing any. I didn't do anything for a while. Now, I'll do the odd tweet. I don't find it comfortable. I don't want to feel like I'm encouraging that time of thing. It's a difficult line because you're encouraging people to communicate with you but you're saying I don't want that kind of communication. It's a difficult means because people feel like they know you. And they seem to be more familiar than you had hoped."

Personal transparency is a choice that nearly every user makes while using Twitter and other social media platforms. While it may help to gain recognition or form relationships with followers, journalists in this study do not appear to be motivated to consistently risk their brand, or risk their safety engaging in sharing personal information online. This was seen in the quantitative study as well. While broadcast journalists displayed a higher prevalence for using personal transparency in comparison to print reporters, the preference appears to be to not share much if at all on Twitter.

The following chapter will synthesise the results of the quantitative and qualitative studies, in the context of the research discussed in the literature review.

9 - Discussion: Journalists Tweet differently

Twitter is a platform which offers a choice. Throughout the UK, local and regional reporters choose the extent they are willing to break from traditional, objective, one-way communication with their audiences. This study illustrates those choices. Some reporters use Twitter to report facts without opinion or bias while keeping the audience at a distance, providing very little detail about themselves or their work. Others welcome transparent, two-way discussions with followers and are more willing to share their personal and professional lives on Twitter. The practices they use on Twitter are reflective of how they want to connect and build trust with their followers.

This study found that the medium a journalist works in has an impact on the choices they make in their transparency practices on Twitter. Print journalists tend to hold to traditional norms of objectivity on Twitter, while those working for broadcast newsrooms consistently utilised more transparency practices at a higher rate in their Twitter practice.

This study has identified that transparency is a normative standard in the Twitter use of local and regional UK reporters. All participants in the sample consistently used transparency practices. However, this does not mean transparency is a new guiding principle in journalism, replacing objectivity. Instead, the findings suggest that on Twitter, the two practices work together. Reporters who utilised their Twitter output for objective reporting still used

transparency practices throughout the collection period. Conversely, reporters who utilised more transparency on Twitter, still used objectivity practices. Not all tweets contained markers of transparency. Some contained both. Transparency has not replaced objectivity as a guiding principle in journalism. It sits alongside it. One of these may guide a journalist more than another. This study found that the medium the reporter works in has an influence on which principle may guide Twitter practice more than the other.

These conclusions were reached by analysing 17,513 tweets from 52 local and regional UK journalists. **Fig 9.1** shows the three approaches used to analyse the quantitative data to reach that conclusion. Initially the prevalence of transparency practices were measured via a content analysis. This provided data on the mean, median and percentage of use for each transparency variable. A Mann-Whitney U test was then used to find if the data was statistically significant. Finally, the relationship between each of the variables was calculated using a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA). The results were cross examined with the prevalence data to identify links between the transparency practices being used by print and broadcast reporters.

Prevalence   Significance   Relationship

Fig 9.1 - Quantitative Analysis Approach

Prior to the content analysis, the researcher noted the volume of tweets sent. There was a substantial difference in how often print and broadcast journalists tweeted. **Fig 9.2** shows print reporters tweeted at nearly twice the rate of the broadcast reporters. The sample was affected by the habits of a few reporters in particular.

Outlet type	Tweets	Journalists in study	Tweets/journalist
Print	**10198**	**21**	**485.6**
Broadcast	**7316**	**31**	**236**

Fig 9.2 - Overall Mean Tweets per Journalist

Only six of the 21 print reporters in the sample tweeted more than the mean for print reporters of 485 times during the collection period, including:

- Andy Naylor - Brighton Argus/ Sports - 959 tweets
- Dave Sedon - Lancashire Evening Post/ Sports - 1254 tweets
- Daid Nowell - Lancashire Evening Post/ Business - 922 tweets
- Jonathan Walker - Newcastle Evening Chronicle/ Politics - 1846 tweets
- Craig Johns - Newcastle Evening Chronicle/ Sports - 1194 tweets
- Mat Davies - South Wales Evening Post / Sports - 616 tweets

This illustrates two interesting points. First, of the six sports reporters in the print sample, five tweeted well above the mean use. One explanation for this is live tweeting around sports matches. Sports journalists often used Twitter to live update their followers with up-to-the-minute updates about matches in their area. For example, over 50% of the tweets sent by Andy Naylor were live tweets when covering Brighton and Hove Albion F.C. He updated his followers on nearly every event during the match, resulting in 500 live tweets in the data set. Similar results were found with Dave Sedon and Craig Johns who had 40% and 60% of their tweets dedicated to live tweeting.

Second, these outliers skewed the data, and therefore the mean. This effect on the mean is seen throughout the data set. The reason for the skewed data, discussed in **chapter 5.3.3**, is a product of sampling error. When the data is skewed by a few journalists tweeting far more than the others, the mean use of the variables become less representative of the true tweeting behaviour shown by the print journalists. This variance was not seen in the broadcast group. Here, 13 of the 31 journalists tweeted over the mean, but many were within 100 tweets of the mean usage. Only three reporters from this group were over 200 tweets from the mean, including:

- Wyre Davies - BBC Cmyru / Politics - 583 tweets
- Adrian Masters - ITV Wales / Politics - 688 tweets
- Andrea Byrne - ITV Wales / Presenter - 586 tweets

Comparing means (usually via a t-test) to find statistically significant differences, which is used in many content analyses, did not provide significant or meaningful data. Comparing medians

via a Mann-Whitney U test found minimal statistical significance in the data, due to the skewness. Therefore, the researcher utilised the prevalence data with a Smallest Space Analysis (SSA). The results (**fig 9.3**) showed some variables, such as live tweeting and minor opining, quite close to each other, while the others were quite spread apart. This suggested that those using one of the closely associated practices was likely to be using the other

Fig 9.3 - Overall SSA Results

The results of the SSA, cross-examined with the percentage of use and prevalence data (**fig 9.4**) of the transparency practices used on Twitter, reveal that print and broadcast journalists have distinct patterns in how they show transparency in their Twitter practice. The SSA shows the variables of live tweeting and minor opining to be closely associated with one another, suggesting that those journalists who use one of these variables. are likely to use the other. When examining the SSA and the content analysis together, it can be seen that these are the defining characteristics of print reporters, compared to the tweeting practice of broadcast journalists.

	Medium	*N*	Mean	Median	SD	%
Live tweeting	Print	21	126.52	53	196.965	29.69
	Broadcast	31	38.65	26	42.317	16.59
Minor opining	Print	21	80.62	44	76.516	19.75
	Broadcast	31	21.13	14	32.491	8.99
Major opining	Print	21	22.86	14	27.868	6.41
	Broadcast	31	21.74	10	32.077	9.23
Linking	Print	21	50.14	28	59.126	11.55
	Broadcast	31	33.23	27	21.115	14.60
Discussion	Print	21	58.33	18	123.088	15.38
	Broadcast	31	37.26	26	32.712	15.81
Job talking	Print	21	12.48	8	12.906	3.14
	Broadcast	31	25.26	10	29.435	10.55
Personal	Print	21	20.76	12	22.596	4.91
	Broadcast	31	45.23	28	41.709	19.05
Retweets	Print	21	107.70	34	117.757	28.56
	Broadcast	31	60.71	73	77.123	38.91

Fig 9.4 - Overall Transparency Practice Content Analysis

The SSA revealed the six other transparency variables to be distanced from one another. When cross-examined with the content analysis data, broadcast reporters used more of the transparency variables with regularity. Therefore, the characteristics were not closely associated with one another. However, the boundary line was drawn when it was noted that all of the practices on the broadcast side of the line were used at higher rates by that group. This suggests that these transparency variables are more closely associated with the practice of broadcast reporters on Twitter.

Three research questions were asked of the data in order to fully answer the overall RQ for this study: How do journalists build trust on Twitter?

RQ1: Is there a difference in the transparency practices used on Twitter by local and regional print and broadcast journalists in the UK?

RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?

 RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices on Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?

9.1 - Print transparency habits

Two transparency variables are closely associated with one another in the SSA and are more

prevalently used by print journalists: live tweeting and minor opining. While both are

transparency practices, print journalist's largely held to traditional, objective reporting practices

on Twitter. Live tweeting is often quick observations of what a journalist is seeing or

experiencing. They are often void of opinion and are meant to quickly inform followers to

something that is currently happening. The transparent element is the use of Twitter to update

followers before all of the information can be pulled together, where some information will not

make the story. Live tweeting is a gatewatching, transparent practice, but one filled with

objective reporting. It was a practice print reporters engaged in heavily.

Live tweeting was closely associated in the SSA plot with the use of minor opining. While

elements of opinions were used in these tweets, the primary function was one-way

communication with users. These tweets did not ask for interaction from followers. While

transparent, these tweets were filled with objective reporting.

Discussed further below, the close association of these transparency variables on the SSA plot,

and the high prevalence of use shown in the content analysis, illustrate that print journalists in

the sample engage with transparency, while holding to traditional practices of objectivity on

Twitter.

The practices favoured by print journalists in the sample agree with earlier research. Singer

(2005) found that while reporters used transparent practices on blogs (pre-Twitter), a platform

away from editorial control, "Journalists' generally 'normalized' their blog to fit old norms and

practices... Even while experimenting with a participatory form of communication, journalists

mostly held fast to their traditional functions" (Singer, 2005). The same sentiment was found in

later research, citing that despite changing technology, the professional norms for journalists

included limiting the sharing of politics and personal opinions (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007).

The data suggests that research over a decade old is still valid amongst local and regional print

journalists. While not universal, reporters from print newsrooms limited the amount of opinions

they shared, and kept their personal lives off the platform. It appears the training or culture

within print newsrooms encourages reporters to keep to traditional, objective principles, even

when communicating on a private account. Explained in **chapter 9.2**, these conclusions can not

be applied to the broadcast reporters, who utilised a wider variety of transparency practices at

a higher rate.

Live tweeting

Live tweeting was the most prevalent transparency practice used by print reporters ($\bar{x}$ = 126.52, % = 29.69) (**fig 9.5**). Live tweets are characterised as tweets which report in (almost) real time, what is happening during a news event, scheduled or not (Broersma and Graham, 2012) The quantitative analysis showed live tweets were used sporadically throughout the collection period, but when used, they were used heavily to report information as it happened, during: house fires, crime scenes, sporting events, press conferences and elections. The mean use and the percentage of use suggest that this is a defining practice of print reporter Twitter practice.

Perhaps more telling is that in spite of live tweeting being the third most used variable by broadcast reporters, they were utilised far less than by comparison ($\bar{x}$ = 38.65. % = 16.59). Overall, this fits with the trend in this study, that broadcast reporters are not using Twitter primarily as a reporting tool. These results are reflected in the SSA (**fig 9.6**). Live tweeting falls on the print side of the boundary line and is closely associated with the use of minor opining, another defining practice for print reporters on Twitter.

Variable	Print		Broadcast		
	%	$\bar{x}$		%	$\bar{x}$
Live Tweeting	29.69	126.52	Retweeting	38.91	60.71
Retweets	26.56	107.70	Personal	19.05	45.23
Minor Opining	19.75	80.62	Live Tweet	16.59	38.65
Discussion	15.38	58.33	Discussion	15.81	37.26
Linking	11.55	50.14	Linking	14.60	33.23
Major Opining	6.41	22.86	Job Talking	10.55	25.26
Personal	4.91	20.76	Maj. Op.	9.23	21.74
Job Talking	3.14	12.48	Min. Op.	8.99	21.13

Fig 9.5 - Overall Transparency Practices Use by Mean and Percentage

Patterns of UK journalists utilising live tweeting in their Twitter practice has been seen before. During the UK riots of 2011, two reporters utilised live reporting tweets in nearly 50% of their Twitter output over four days and nights. These live tweets were often primary observations, mixed with eyewitness accounts (Vis, 2013).
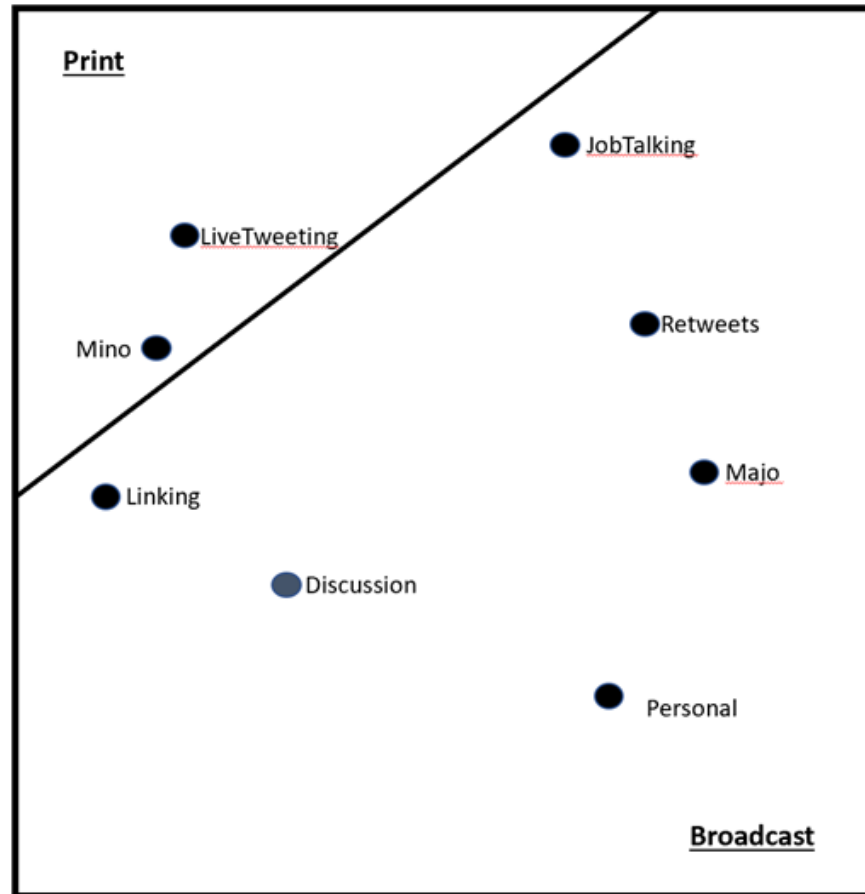
Fig 9.6 -Overall SSA Results

Using Twitter as a live reporting tool was discussed in several of the qualitative interviews. Jack Johnson, Oxford Mail believes using Twitter to report from live events is one of the few ways people can still define themselves as journalists.

"If I was at a rally today, I'd be taking photos, posting them, getting quotes from people who were there and protesting... It just shows that you are a more reliable source. We are trying to say, oh, hold on, digging our elbows out and say we are still here, trust us. We are who you should be following. These are the tweets that are the most reliable.

You wanna show that you are a trustworthy source yourself. If you're telling people I got this from x, I got this from y, people are more likely to trust your tweets and see who is a reliable source."

Craig Johns, Newcastle Evening Chronicle (NEC) also discussed how tweeting information instantaneously may lead to him being a more trusted source of information for his followers.

"If you get information, particularly in today's journalism, it's kind of like a thirst to be first. Everybody wants to be first and there are times where if you sit on information that you have now, somebody may have it 5 minutes later and you've lost that chance to build that trust and say to your audience that I know this information."

When discussed by broadcast journalists, live tweeting appeared to be viewed less as a trust builder, but more as a way to simplify the news reporting process.

Abbie Jones / BBC NW: *It's a faster medium. You can go to court now and tweet it. It's an added pressure to your job but you can sit and tweet, but it may be two hours before you go live and can do the news on the tele.*

Ann O'Connor / ITV Meridian: *"It is the purest form of what we do. Here I am, look at it. There is no corporate side to it, there's no other influences. It's here it is, this is the fire, here is the crash, here is the murder scene, here is the council meeting, look it at. I think this is one of the best uses of Twitter, you can really get stuff out there. I loved working in radio before coming to*

TV because it was so immediate and so quick. Twitter is one of those fantastic tools as a

journalist. You can literally get out of the car and show people what is going on."

The process of creating news takes time. Broadcasts are scheduled. Papers need to be printed.

Twitter created a platform where broadcast schedules and deadlines do not matter. Information

can be reported, and is expected to be seen by audiences on Twitter, as it is happening. The

prevalent use of live tweeting by print reporters suggests it is a defining characteristic of their

Twitter practice.

Minor Opining

Minor opining is a transparency variable marked by tweets which primarily convey information

to followers. While opinion may be included, the primary function of this tweet was to report

information. These tweets were written with the purpose of one-way communication. Their

primary function was to report information, not to discuss or interact with followers.
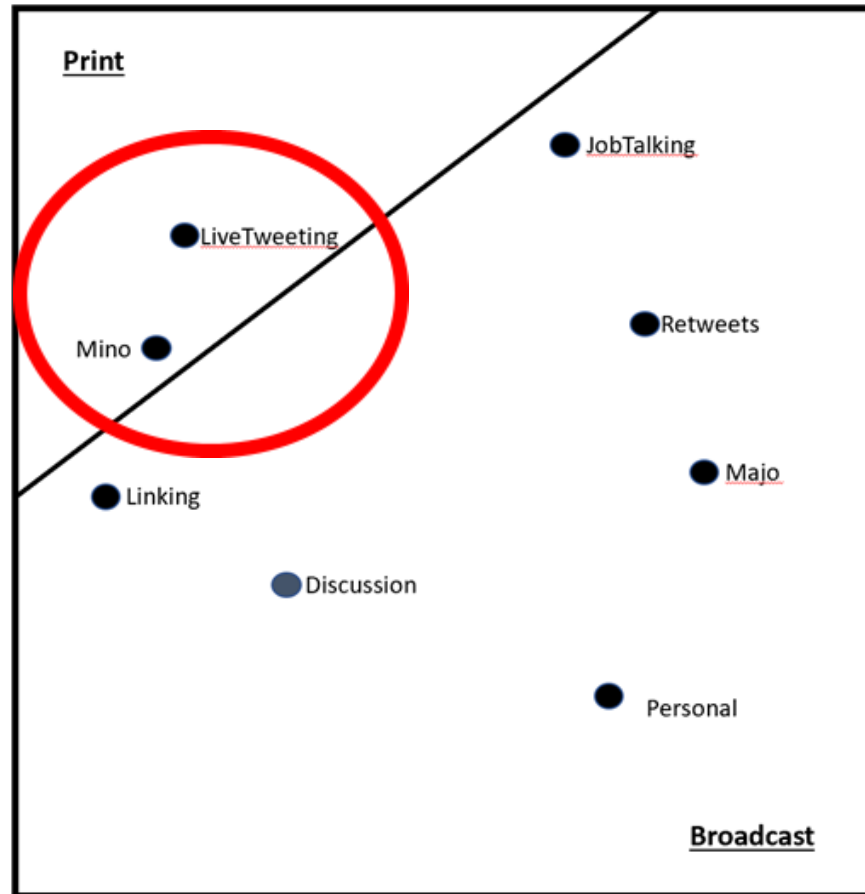
Fig 9.7 - Overall SSA Results: Print Focus

This transparency variable was closely associated with live tweeting on the SSA (**fig 9.7**),

meaning those who use one are likely to use the other. Cross-referenced with the content

analysis data (**fig 9.5**) from the content analysis, it becomes clear that these variables are

consistent with the tweeting habits of print reporters. Minor opining was used regularly by

those in print newsrooms ($\bar{x}$ = 80.68, % = 19.75), compared to those working in broadcast ($\bar{x}$ =

21.13, % = 8.99). Minor opining was the least used transparency variable by broadcast reporters

in the data set (**fig 9.8**),.

		N	$\overline{x}$	M	%
Minor Opining	Print	21	80.62	44	19.75
	Broadcast	31	21.13	14	8.99

Fig 9.8 - Minor Opining Prevalence by Group

Each variable was analysed using a A Mann-Whitney U test to determine if there was a significant (p=<.005) difference between how print journalists and broadcast journalists use transparency practices on Twitter. As seen in **fig 9.9**, no other variable was found to be statistically significant in the data set, other than minor opining (p=.000), meaning that the difference between the median use was statistically significant. This supports the outcomes of the content analysis, and the SSA finding, that the use of minor opining in Twitter reporting is more closely associated print reporters, not broadcast.

	Medium	N	M*	MW**	Z	Sig
Live tweeting	Print	21	53	218.000	-2.005	.05
	Broadcast	31	26			
Minor opining	Print	21	44	83.000	-4.526	.000
	Broadcast	31	14			
Major opining	Print	21	14	314.500	-.205	.84
	Broadcast	31	10			
Linking	Print	21	28	314.500	-.205	.84
	Broadcast	31	27			
Discussion	Print	21	18	394.000	-.401	.69
	Broadcast	31	26			
Job talking	Print	21	8	235.599	-1.681	.09
	Broadcast	31	10			
Personal	Print	21	12	204.000	-2.267	.02
	Broadcast	31	28			
Retweets	Print	21	34	300.000	-.476	.63
	Broadcast	31	73			

Fig 9.9 - Overall Transparency Practice Statistical Significance Results

The qualitative interviews with print reporters revealed a willingness to hold on to traditional norms of objectivity, even on Twitter. For example, Oxford Mail sport reporter Jack Johnson talked about how he approaches his Twitter practice:

"I think it comes down to accuracy. If all your tweeting is accurate, current and it relates to your followers and who you're approaching, I think it's quite straight forward... During rugby, I have weekly stats on who scored tries and who kicked the most points and pictures from the weekend, tag them in it. It's all about who you are aiming it at. Some will like that and some won't like it. I think as long as you are correct in what you're tweeting and you aren't arrogant... I keep it pretty straight and don't push the limits of what I'm tweeting."

This notion of objectivity for the benefit of the followers was one shared by fellow print journalists, Craig Johns and Joel Adams:

Craig Johns: *With Twitter, I try to keep professional. I don't know if people would respect you or not more. Twitter is an interesting place. People will happily use Twitter as a normal social thing as you would Facebook but there are a lot of people on there that just want their football news, especially the people that follow me. I'm not sure they are interested in learning about my personal life."*

Joel Adams: "*I don't see why anybody should give a fuck about my life. I think it would be insulting to my followers to tell them what I had for breakfast or whether I enjoyed my date last night. I don't believe that's why they follow me. It's none of their business and I don't really understand why anybody cares about what anybody had for breakfast. I think it would undermine what I use Twitter for if that's what was coming across people's feeds when they saw my name. If you told me that by tweeting that I had crushed avocado on toast in the morning, I could increase my followers two fold, I still wouldn't do it."*

The findings from the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that the limited use of opinion when reporting information on Twitter, and the use of live tweeting, are closely associated with print reporters.

9.2 - Broadcast transparency Habits

Unlike the closely associated variables which characterised the Twitter use of print reporters, the variables more prevalent amongst broadcast journalists were scattered on the SSA plot. This suggests there is little link between a reporter using one variable and all others. The outcome is likely due to the scattered use of Twitter by broadcast journalists. Where print reporters used a few transparency practices heavily, and others almost not at all, broadcast reporters used a greater mix of the practices more often. This resulted in higher prevalence rates in most variables (**fig 9.5**) and scattered variables on the SSA plot (**fig 9.6**). Each of the transparency practices used more prevalently by broadcast journalists, is on the broadcast side of the SSA boundary line. This provides evidence that these variables are more consistent with tweeting practices of that group.

The transparency practices used more prevalently by broadcast reporters, and were associated with the broadcast group on the SSA, are further removed from traditional objective practices. Sharing personal information, the opinions or work of others and noticeable opinions alongside reporting, are all practices which are not consistent with objectivity but are more closely associated with a two-way, open and transparent relationship between reporters and followers.

Personalising

Personalising sits farthest away from minor opining and live tweeting on the SSA plot (**fig 9.11**). This means that a journalist using one transparency practice is least likely to use the other. They are not closely associated behaviours, suggesting personalising tweets are the defining characteristic of broadcast reporter transparency use. Personalising tweets occured when reporters used their account to tweet about a collection of personal and professional topics. Sharing information about things they were doing, music tastes, and commenting on popular tv shows like Love Island are just some examples of what this entails.

Fig 9.11 - Overall SSA Results: Personalising Focus

By each of the measures of prevalence, broadcast journalists consistently used Twitter to share

information about themselves, where print reporters did so rarely. **Fig 9.12** shows the mean

usage of personalising tweets and the percentage of use was higher for broadcast journalists,

despite tweeting at nearly half the rate at those working in print newsrooms. Broadcast

reporters used personalising tweets at nearly four times the rate of print reporters.

		N	$\overline{x}$	%
Personalising	Print	21	20.76	4.91
	Broadcast	31	45.23	19.05

Fig 9.12 - Personalising Prevalence by Group

For broadcast reporters, these types of tweets were the second most prevalently transparent

tweets in the data set, ranking only behind retweeting ($\overline{x}$ = 60.71, % = 38.91). This paints a

picture of how broadcast reporters in this sample want to use their Twitter feeds, giving

followers a sense of who they are outside of the job and using their platform as a reporter

However, this is not universal within the group. **Fig 9.13** shows the varied rates in which

broadcast reporters utlised personalising tweets throughout the collection period. 12 of the 31

broadcast participants used the practice in less than 10% of their tweets, while 9 of the 31 used

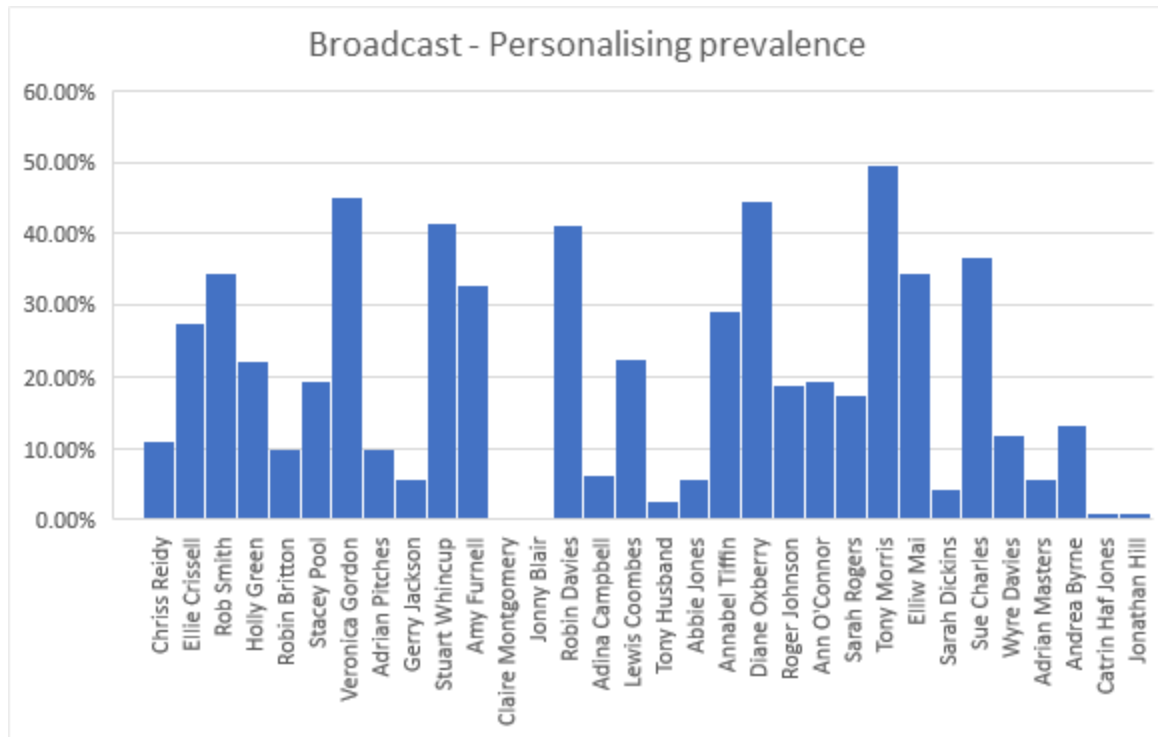personalising tweets in over 30% of their tweets.

Fig 9.13 - Broadcast: Personalising Prevalence by Reporter

This variance was supported in the qualitative data. Where some broadcast reporters felt

personalising tweets were a normal part of social media practice, others did not see the merit,

while another encountered personal danger (**chapter 8.4**). Interestingly, opinions expressed in

interviews about the use of personalising was often reflected in their Twitter data. For example,

Abbie Jones, reporter for BBC NW used personalising in less than 6%. In her interview, she

stated:

"I don't put my personal life on Twitter because I don't want anyone knowing about my family.

Doing investigations, I've got to be careful. I've never had problems but somebody I know doing

similar work had their car fire bombed. I'm not saying I'm at that level or doing anything that

serious but I don't want anyone knowing where I live. I don't put anything about my child on

Twitter. It's more of a work account because I don't go on there to chat or talk about my daily

life, or tv programmes... I suppose it comes down to what kind of figure you are. If I did put stuff

about my personal life, I'd probably get a bit more followers. Twitter is a tool for my job, but

that's where it is. It's not something I do in my spare time."

Ann O'Connor from ITV Meridian used the personalising practice in 25/128 tweets (% = 19.53). Pairing with her increased use of personalising in her tweet sample, she appeared much more willing to share details about her personality with followers:

"I tend not to say what I've been eating and where I've been on holiday. Possibly you show your

personality through your taste. What you like, what bands you like. Like a person, you RT people.

I won't talk about my kids online and I try not to say where I live. I think broadcasters are just

more used to people seeing them and knowing what their sense of humour might be. Print

journalists are a bit more traditional in the fact that they don't seem themselves as the story."

When interviewed, all print reporters in the sample confirmed that sharing personal details is not what they use Twitter for, going as far as questioning the motivations for those who choose to. For Elliw Mai, reporter for BBC Wales, the motivation is her that Twitter output is an extension of herself and her personality (personalising % = 34.63) , something she wants her followers to see and connect with:

"I think if you look at my Twitter, you see who I am. I feel that in this day in age, if I were to go for a job, or even in my personal life, people look at your Twitter profile and you want to make sure you are giving an accurate portrayal of yourself. I think it's important to be honest and transparent and quite up front on there, personally and professionally... I think you can see I have distinct differences between my professional tweets and how I tweet in a personal capacity. I'm obviously quite aware who I work for, with the BBC and what I can tweet. People can take it as I'm a BBC employee so I'm quite wary of that all the time. I'm quite careful about what I tweet and when I tweet as well. Again, I think there is still quite a bit of personality in there."

When reviewed together, the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that the personalising transparency practice is one that is a defining characteristic of broadcast reporters' transparency use.

Retweets

Retweeting was the most prevalent transparent practice used by the reporters in the sample. Broadcast reporters used it at a significantly higher rate, which is consistent with it's spacing from the print transparency characteristics highlighted in the SSA (**fig 9.14**). However, the analysis suggests that this is the one transparent practice that both broadcast and print reporters have integrated into their professional working norms.

Fig 9.14 - Overall SSA Results: Retweet Focus

Retweeting is a transparent Twitter practice which takes advantage of the limitless nature of the platform. It is an approach which largely focuses on the republishing, publicising, conceptualization, and curation of existing material rather than the development of substantial new journalistic content (Bruns, 2011, p. 123; Alejandro, 2010, p.13). In an era where information is no longer scarce, Twitter allows reporters to be a gatewatcher. Rather than gatekeeping, and reporting only new journalistic content which fits into the broadcast of the paper, this new role encourages journalists to share information with their followers.
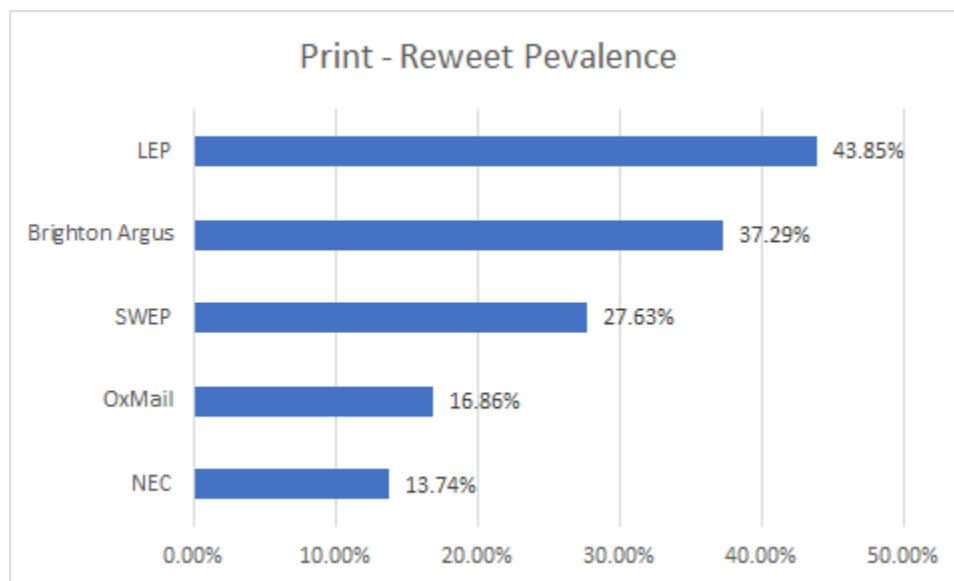
Fig 9.15 - Print: Retweet Prevalence by Outlet

Overall, retweets accounted for over a quarter of the tweets (% = 26.56) sent by print reporters in the sample. This was not a universal rate amongst the newsrooms. 43.85% of the tweets used by reporters at the Lancashire Evening Post were not original tweets or content (**fig 9.15**). They were retweets, sharing tweets with their followers. This highlights a shift in journalistic practice. Traditional gatekeeping practices would have journalists reporting a limited amount of original

reporting. Retweeting is the opposite of this, where reporters are sharing information from other Twitter users. This was often, but not exclusively, a mix of tweets from colleagues in their newsroom and other journalistic content. Reporters also shared tweets from bands, local interest groups, football and rugby teams, government departments and funny content, like videos of cats playing pianos. Reporters at the Brighton Argus used retweets with regularity throughout the sample, while those at the Newcastle Evening Chronicle (NEC) and Oxford Mail (Oxmail) put little emphasis on it. In fact, two of the four reporters in the sample from the NEC did not use any RT's, the only two reporters in the entire sample to do so.
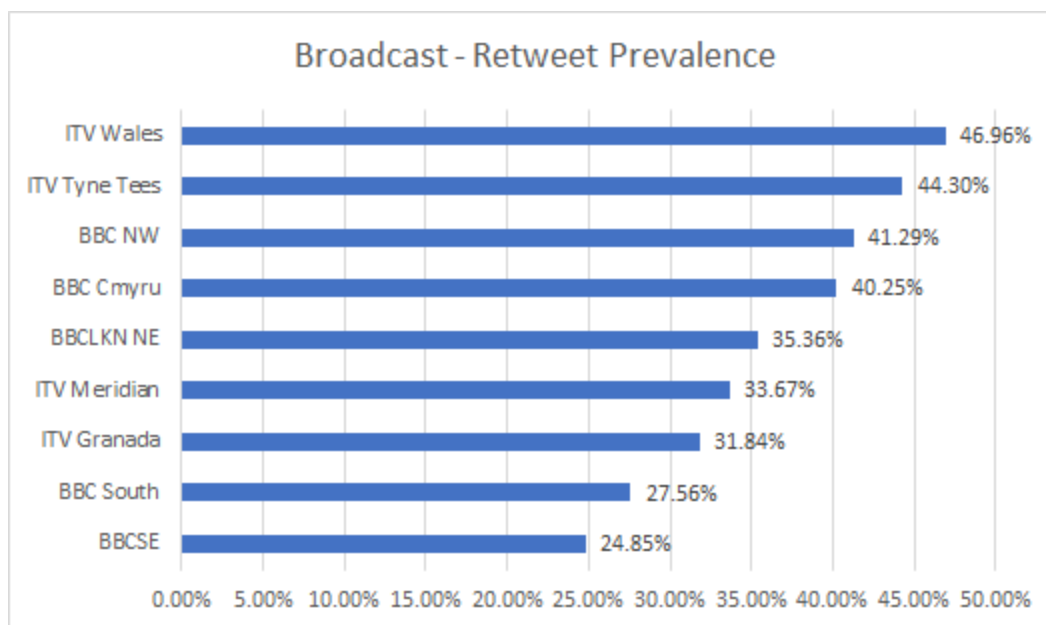

Fig 9.16 - Broadcast: Retweet Prevalence by Outlet

Despite the prevalent retweeting practice by those in print newsrooms, retweeting is a practice more associated with broadcast reporters. RT was the most prevalent transparency practice used by broadcast journalists (% = 38.91). This was the highest use of a single transparency

variable by either group. It is a defining characteristic of broadcast tweeting practice in this sample and appears to be a practice which is consistently used amongst all broadcast newsrooms (**fig 9.16**). The lowest prevalence of retweets within broadcast newsrooms was found at BBCSE (% = 24.85). This was near the average for print newsrooms (% = 26.56). This indicates a transparent behaviour that broadcast journalists deem important and useful to their practice.

This was illustrated in the qualitative interviews by Abbie Jones, reporter at BBCNW:

"I don't feel the need to tweet any old rubbish. I don't have the time or inclination to tweet a lot so when I am on Twitter, I feel the best way for me to quickly pass on information to my audience is through retweeting. I can still provide information that I believe to be true and that I trust, and get that to my audience without having to tweet the information myself. Plus, the journalist putting the information out is the original source and by retweeting, that is that form of transparency I can show by not altering or crafting the news through my own view. It is true transparency for that to come from the source."

Elliw Mai, reporter for BBC Cmyru also believed that retweeting was a way of removing subjectivity from reporting, while being transparent with followers.

"Twitter is much more about sharing that content and retweeting that content rather than me tweeting all the time... I think it more comes down to whether it's a source I trust. If I trust their content, I don't see any reason not to share and retweet their content. Especially if it was a

crime or an election or something of that sort or if they have photos and video from the scene,

that's a better tweet for my followers than for me to type a summary of what is happening. It's

better to have it from the source."

One comment from a print journalist illustrated how using Twitter and to communicate with

followers outside of traditional outlets has changed journalism practice. Craig Johns, sports

reporter for the NEC spoke about how retweets are a routine part of his job:

"Last night, a Sky Sport presenter, Pete Graves tweeted a picture of him on a train with Kennedy,

who was on the same train to go sign with Newcastle United. I retweeted that even though Pete

Graves isn't a colleague of mine, it's news my followers who are Newcastle United fans, would

be interested in."

This is what retweeting allows journalists to do. It allows them to share what they feel is

important to their audience. While this information would not be newsworthy or notable

enough to be in a newspaper, the information was something Johns felt his audience would

find informative and entertaining. This illustrates the changing practice from gatekeeping to

gatewatching. It appears to be an important aspect of journalistic practice for print reporters,

and a defining characteristic for those working in broadcast newsrooms in the UK.

These results challenge the findings of Singer (2005) who noted that journalists' generally

'normalised' their blog to fit old norms and practices. Even in interactive and participatory

format, Singer found that reporters sought to remain gatekeepers. Over a decade after Singer's

study, the media landscape has changed. The influence and power of traditional gatekeepers of

content has been eroded. In their Twitter content analysis, Lasorsa et al (2012) found retweets

were used in 15% of the overall tweets sent by American reporters. According to the results

found in this study, it appears that trend is not only continuing, but growing. Overall retweets

accounted for 24.6% of the Twitter data set.

Major Opining

Major opining is a transparency practice found in tweets which primarily reported information, but also included opinions or biases. The SSA (**fig 9.17**) found the use of this variable to be most closely associated with those who use retweets. As was previously discussed, retweets were a characteristic used by both groups of reporters, but most predominantly by those in broadcast newsrooms. As the SSA plot indicates, major opining is less associated with the practices used more by print journalists. When cross referenced with the data from the content analysis, the reasoning becomes clear.

Fig 9.17 - Overall SSA Results: Major Opining Focus

Fig 9.18 shows that despite 10 less participants in the group, the mean use of major opining by print reporters is similar to the mean of broadcast reporter use ($\bar{x}$ = 2286, $\bar{x}$= 21.74). The difference in use between the two groups becomes more clear when looking at the percentage of use of the variable within each group (% = 6.41, % = 9.23).

		N	$\bar{x}$	M	%
Major Opining	Print	21	22.86	14	6.41
	Broadcast	31	21.74	10	9.23

Fig 9.18 - Major Opining Prevalence by Group

These results offer an extra layer of analysis when examining the results of the content analysis **(fig 9.19)**. The use of major opining as a transparency practice in reporting ranks lower in the prevalence of usage among broadcast journalists, than within the print journalist group. The SSA and the data discussed above suggest that it is predominantly a broadcast journalist characteristic, yet they seem to value it less.

Alternatively, the three pieces of evidence (SSA, content analysis, ranking) suggest that broadcast journalists not only value major opining more, they appear to value transparency more. **Fig 9.19** shows print reporters using three transparency practices in less than 6.5% of

their overall tweets. Broadcast reporters utilise all transparency variables in at least 8.99% of

tweets.

Variable	Print		Broadcast		
	%	x̄		%	x̄
Live Tweeting	29.69	126.52	Retweeting	38.91	60.71
Retweets	26.56	107.70	Personal	19.05	45.23
Minor Opining	19.75	80.62	Live Tweet	16.59	38.65
Discussion	15.38	58.33	Discussion	15.81	37.26
Linking	11.55	50.14	Linking	14.60	33.23
Major Opining	6.41	22.86	Job Talking	10.55	25.26
Personal	4.91	20.76	Maj. Op.	9.23	21.74
Job Talking	3.14	12.48	Min. Op.	8.99	21.13

Fig 9.19 - Overall Transparency Practices Use by Mean and Percentage

Despite the relatively low usage in this study, the major opining variable illustrates a compelling

difference in how local and regional print and broadcast reporters in the UK utilise transparency

in their Twitter practice. Lasorsa et al (2012) also found major opining to be one of the least

used variables in their study of national American journalists on Twitter, though at a higher rate,

found in 15.7% of their sample. The low combined prevalence rate in this study (% = 7.58) also

suggests that reporters are keeping opinions seperate to news reporting, opting instead to show

their personality and opinions in other ways.

The topic of showing personality while refraining from commenting on current events was discussed in the qualitative interviews. Ann O'Connor, reporter for ITV Meridian believed it was the job of experts in topics to provide commentary and opinion. Her strengths lie elsewhere.

"Robert Peston (ITV political editor) is hugely knowledgeable in his field. We look to him to sort through all the news going on around political stories and cut through them. We trust him to be equally scathing of both sides politically or in an economic argument. Whereas I feel very experienced in reporting what is happening; murders, fires, dogs on skateboards, that kind of thing. I don't feel I have a massive expertise in anything in depth. I'm good at reporting what I am seeing and telling you what I think is interesting about a story. Which is a comment in some ways. But I'm not here to tell you a particular argument is rubbish or a particular argument is great."

This was a sentiment shared amongst the other local and regional journalists interviewed. Robin Britton, ITV Granada believed that his tweeting should be a reflection of what is aired on ITV Granada, researched, objective reporting that is expected by OfCom. However, the flexibility of the platform to interact and show humour can be a temptation.

"I occasionally (said in a sarcastic manner) have a go at Nigel Farrage to remind people that he's stood for parliament 7 times and never been elected and he said in the week before the Brexit

referendum that if remain were to 'just' win, he was in favour of a second referendum. I think

things like that are fair game to point out."

Pointing out political hypocrisy and publically holding those in power to account was a theme

heavily discussed with Joel Adams, Brighton Argus. He believed it was his role as an informed

person to provide context and comment, directly alongside his reporting on Twitter.

"News reports need to be unbiased and balanced and largely devoid of opinion. But oftentimes,

when reporting political news, the most interesting story is the hypocrisy.

Politician makes claim, is a very uninteresting and simplistic news story. A much better version is,

politician makes claim in the context politicians behaviour supports or repudiates claim, broader

context of politician's colleagues support or do not support claim, in broader context of

electorate in line or against claim. That's 'politician makes a claim' in the proper context of a

news story.

What you can do on Twitter and what I like about Twitter is, where politicians have said

something which is obviously incompetent or hypocritical or inconsistent, it's quite hard to get

that across with the right level of sarcasm and frustration in a news story. Particularly in UK

journalism.

The tradition of local journalism is to play it very straight. Which I do (in print). Where Twitter

comes into play, is not to make a political point but to in a light-hearted way, deflating an ego or

calling our hypocrisy, or embarrassing somebody for a 180, in a way you can't do in news print.

What I tend to use Twitter to do, is to put into public domain the kind of irreverent chat that you

hear in a newsroom about the background of a story."

Adams shares the opinions and analysis he discusses with his colleagues to give greater context

to the stories he is covering. This is a break from traditional, objective journalism practices.

While Adams is a print reporter using these practices, they are more common amongst

broadcast journalists in the sample. The next variable discussed provides another way for

journalists to be able to 'lift the curtain' (Karlsson, 2011) of the news production process.

Job Talking

The boundary line of the SSA (**fig 9.21**) suggests job talking tweets, or tweets which primarily

convey information about the journalist's job, or the process of doing their job, is a practice

associated with broadcast reporters. This is confirmed when cross-referenced with the

prevalence data from the content analysis (**fig 9.22**). Broadcast journalists are seen to have a

higher mean, median and percentage of use of this transparency practice.

Fig 9.21 - Overall SSA Results: Job Talking Focus

		N	$\bar{x}$	M	%
Job talking	Print	21	12.48	12.906	3.14
	Broadcast	31	25.26	29.435	10.55

Fig 9.22 - Job Talking Prevalence by Group

In line with other variables already discussed, the use of job talking tweets was not universal amongst all broadcast newsrooms, nor unused by print reporters. **Fig 9.23** displays the rate of job talking use by reporters from broadcast newsrooms. Those working at BBC NW appear as an outlier here, using the transparency variable in nearly 20% of their tweet sample. Two reporters in particular skewed the sample. Annabelle Tiffin used the job talking practice in 29.17% of her 96 tweets, while Diane Oxberry dedicated 44.69% of her 179 tweets to talking about her job.
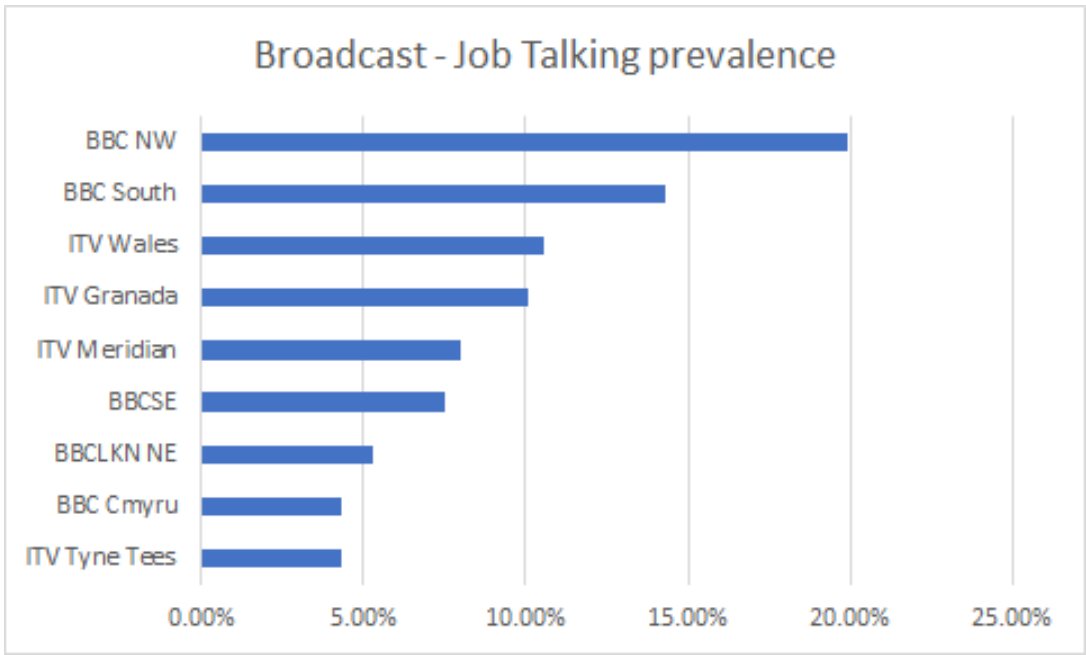
Fig 9.23 - Broadcast: Job Talking Percentage of Use by Outlet

The overall rates of use (% = 6.25) are consistent with the Lasorsa et al (2012) content analysis which found 8.9% of tweets were used for job talking in the sample. The researchers noted that these relatively low rates suggest that what Singer noted in 2005 is still true, reporters are still adjusting to new practices and norms on Twitter. Not all transparency variables are going to be used, or used equally. While not used at as high of rates as other variables, those working in broadcasting newsrooms tend to utilise the job talking variable more prevalently than those working in print newsrooms in the UK, in this study.

Discussion / Linking

These two differing transparency variables shared similar characteristics in the sample.

Discussion tweets are tweets which are discussions between journalists and other Twitter users.

It is the two-way communication social media platforms are known for. Linking is a one-way

communication transparency practice to provide accountability in reporting. Linking was coded

in the content analysis as tweets which contained a hyperlink to another website. Hyperlinks

often provide support to the tweet, providing the original source of information. These links

were used for three main purposes:

- The journalist's own news organization

- Another news medium

- Another link.

These practices are nearly polar opposites in their purpose and practice. However, the SSA and

the data indicate that if journalists use one, they are likely to use the other. The SSA associated

these two variables closely in the lower right quadrant of the plot. The boundary line indicates

that these are practices associated with broadcast journalists (**fig 9.24**), which is supported

when the outcomes are cross-referenced with the data from the content analysis.

Fig 9.24 - Overall SSA Results: Discussion/Linking Focus

Fig 9.25 shows the similarities in usage. Broadcast journalists used both variables at a higher rate than print reporters. The reason these figures are so similar to one another is because, as the SSA indicates, those who use one of these variables, are likely to use the other. It appears this is happening for both groups at similar rates, with both variables. The lower mean usage is explained by the larger number of broadcast participants. The percentage of use indicates that in both variables, broadcast journalists used them at a higher rate. This is illustrated when looking at the newsroom usage.

		N	$\bar{x}$	%
Linking	Print	21	50.14	11.55
	Broadcast	31	33.23	14.60
Discussion	Print	21	58.33	15.38
	Broadcast	31	37.26	15.81

Fig 9.25 - Linking/Discussion Prevalence by Group

The rates of use for these two variables were similar between the groups. However, these two variables are consistently used more by broadcast reporters (**fig 9.25**). There were few outliers in usage in the data set. The only exception being Holly Green, ITV Meridian. She was very active in her discussion on Twitter (% = 57.6). Her 124 discussion tweets accounted for 10.7% of all discussion tweets sent by broadcast reporters in the sample.
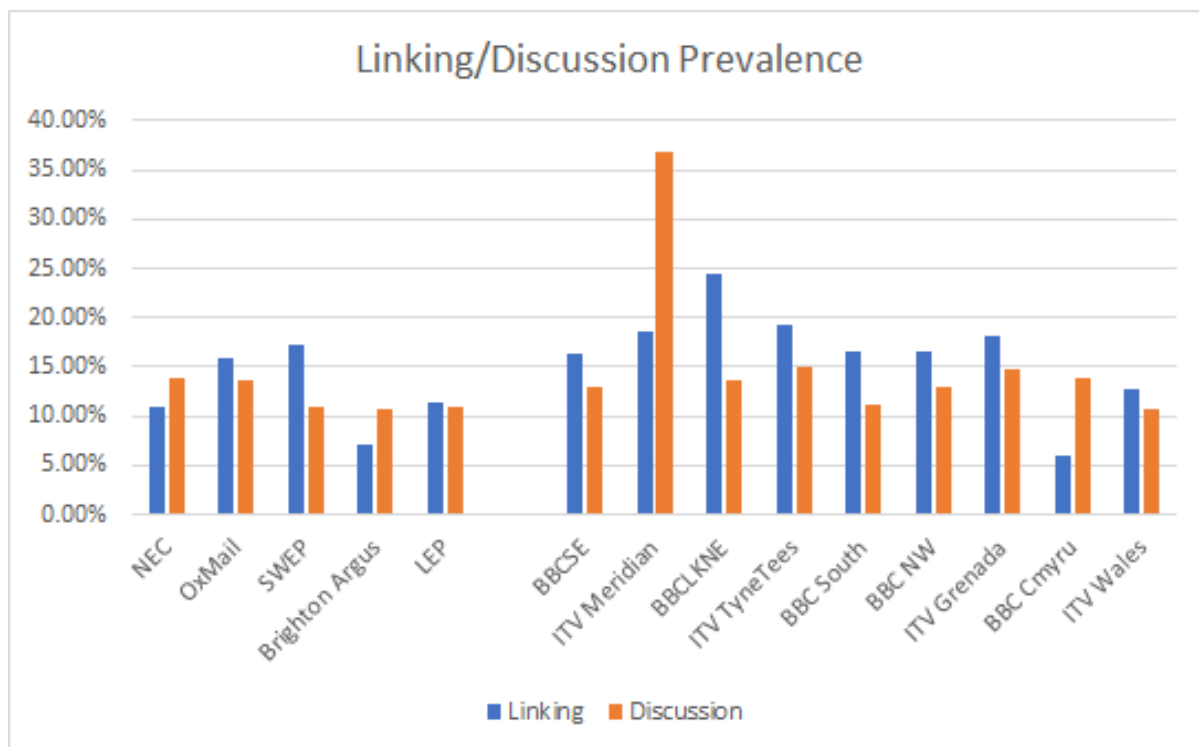
Fig 9.26 - Linking/Discussion Percentage by Outlet

These results draw interesting comparisons to the Lasorsa et al (2012) analysis. The group found linking to be far more prevalent in their data set of 430 of the most followed American reporters. They found linking used in 42% of the tweets in their sample. This study found linking used in just 12.82% of tweets. This indicates a prominent difference in how local and regional UK reporters are utilisingTwitter in their practice. While broadcast reporters are more likely to use links in their tweeting, it is not to the levels seen in the previous study.

The transparent practice of discussion tweets were used similarly in the two studies. Lasorsa et al (2012) found this in 14.9% of their sample. This study found discussion tweets used in 15.59% of this analysis, with a higher prevalence amongst broadcast reporters. This indicates a similar

approach in how the reporters across two samples utilised two-way communication in their Twitter practice.

The qualitative interviews indicated mixed feelings around these variables. Robin Britton, a 56 year-old reporter for ITV Granada, viewed the use of links as a traditional practice, with a primary reason to drive Twitter users to the Granada website. A similar use of links in Singer's (2005) study of political journalists, indicates that journalists have used linking this way over time. Discussed in **chapter 4.2.3**, the primary drive of this is financial. Website traffic generates advertising revenue. With the tight budgets of local newsrooms, it is clear these motivations for transparency through the use of links remain.

However, younger users saw the merits of website traffic, but also viewed linking and discussions as something that are linked. A reporter using one, will see increased benefits by engaging with the other. 26 year-old Craig Johns of the NEC explains:

"Your main aim is to have people read your articles. Twitter is such a huge tool for us, making people come to our website. The latest data from us 30% come from Twitter and just over 30% come from Google searches.

Social media is rising in how people come to us. You can't just have a think where you are posting links constantly because it would look robotic and I think that's why, going back to the trustworthy thing, if you can be seen to engage with people and to be seen as not robotic, willing to chat with them, having that engagement and human side to Twitter can also help with

people thinking of you as a person that people can go to and people want to read your stuff

because it doesn't look like a robot. It looks like a person wrote it and it makes them more likely

to engage with your information."

This illustrates the close association of the two variables. Twitter allows journalists a platform

for engagement and providing accountability. The quantitative evidence shows this occurring

and the interviews confirm these are conscious choices some are making to appear worthy of

trust to other Twitter users. Joel Adams, 34 year-old reporter for the Brighton Argus also noted

that interacting with followers on Twitter was something he felt he owed them.

"I think it's an implicit responsibility. Twitter is a conversations forum, a newspaper website is

not. On a newspaper website, I went out, I did the work, I've written this story, published it and if

you want to waffle on and argue beneath the line, go on, but I have other shit to do.

But if I've tweeted something, particularly if it's a bit sly or point scoring I think it would be

cowardly to not interact with the tweet... If you think yourself above that, or aloof those who

want to interact with you, it is your responsibility to interact with them after making a claim.

So I think tweeting carries with it an implicit responsibility to engage with people who engage

with you."

Adams followed this up by noting that abuse from other users made him question the extent to

which he interacted with followers.

"I would not go up to a stranger in the street, after hearing something they said to a number of other people and shout abuse in their face. That is exactly what it is to do, tweeting to their own followers, take issue with it and hurl abuse. If I'm talking to people I know on the street and say something and somebody else comes up and shouts, "You're fucking stupid and your paper is drivel".. If that happened on the street I'd punch them in the nose. Because that would be a reasonable reaction and I don't understand why people do that on Twitter but if they do I reserve my right to give them a verbal punch in the nose."

Abuse stemming from discussion and interaction with followers was also discussed by Stacey Poole, ITV Meridian. Described in **chapter 8.4**, Poole described how interacting with followers led to her being the victim of three separate stalkers in the case of a year.

"I felt compelled that if they tweeted to me, that I should reply, I thought what's the point of me being on there if I'm not going to reply? It seems like a pretty pointless platform if you aren't going to respond to anyone. I did reply to a lot of people.
Some of them became quite persistent and it turned out they weren't necessarily viewers. They were people out of our geographical region. And were then tuning into their Sky Box to tune into the station I was on and then found me on Twitter. And that is what became problematic. People started to become a bit obsessed because they feel like they have an in to you. If you're on TV and not on Twitter, people have no way of communicating with you, really. But it's a very easy way to communicate and make your feelings quite clear on Twitter. And I found that people became slightly aggressive. 3 in particular."

The experiences left Poole not wanting to interact at all. She said the completely abandoned Twitter use for a time, but even that presents challenges:

"As a presenter, you should be putting yourself out there. It's a very difficult balance. And without a doubt, I'm not the only person who's had these tweets and some people ignore it and carry on regardless but I didn't feel that way. It made me feel uncomfortable.
I think you definitely notice if you tweet pictures, behind the scenes pictures, if you tweet about something they can't get from watching the programme, you get a much bigger response and a better response. People are keen to get personal information. The tweets I get more than anything else are what are you wearing today and if I did a tweet about what I was about to wear, I'd imagine that would be the most popular thing I could tweet about which I think is the most inane thing I could tweet about. But that's the kind of thing that people appear to want."

The data discussed highlights the difference in usage of discussion and linking tweets between print and broadcast reporters. The SSA, cross-referenced with the data from the content analysis, suggests that these transparency practices are more consistent with the Twitter usage of broadcast journalists. However, the data also reveals that those who engage with one practice are likely to engage with the other, no matter which medium the journalist works for. This implies that these transparency variables are closely linked in practice.

9.3 - Situational variable

After analysing the full data set, the researcher examined a subset of the data to find the

answer to **RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?**

Within the sample, journalists tweeted about live, unplanned news items often including fires,

scene updates, updates during sports matches (both ones attended by the journalists or

watching on television) and press conferences. Reporters live tweet from these events to keep

viewers updated before traditional outputs like articles and broadcasts can be assembled.

These situations are scattered for all journalists, depending on what events are happening in

their patch. This is difficult to measure across the country for the simple reason that different

things happen in different places at different times. Over a three month period, certain cities

may experience traumatic events, and others may not. This would have a direct influence on the

tweeting habits of local journalists in that area, versus a local journalist working in another. The

focus on local and regional journalists in this study meant a need for a universal event all

reporters could be covering.

A snap election being announced and completed during the collection period provided that

opportunity. By their nature, national elections are a summation of local races throughout the

UK. Journalists in every part of the country have an election occurring in their coverage area.

The election was held on 8 June 2017. The researcher performed the same quantitative

three-prong analysis for the overall data for tweets sent between 5th and 9th June. The results

show that journalists' transparency practices did change, significantly in some areas. However,

the defining characteristics described in the overall data set remained consistent.

9.3.1 - Twitter use

Over the five days surrounding the election, journalists in the sample tweeted 1,650 times. Similar to results found in the overall data set, print journalists used Twitter at a higher rate than broadcast journalists. However, **fig 9.27** shows an increased use of Twitter by broadcast journalists.

	N	$\bar{x}$ Overall	$\bar{x}$ 5-9 June	Effect on $\bar{x}$
Print	21	5.33	6.78	+1.37
Broadcast	31	2.59	6.05	+3.46

Fig 9.27 - Mean Tweets Sent During Overall and Sit. Variable

Discussed in **chapter 9.1,** ITV Wales reporter Adrian Masters was a significant part of this increased usage of Twitter by broadcast journalists. He tweeted heavily around the election with comments, interviews and election day poll updates, 198 times over 5 days ($\bar{x}$ = 39.6). His tweets alone accounted for 12% of all tweets sent around the situational variable. Only two others, ITV Wales colleague Andrea Byrne and BBC Cmyru reporter Wyre Davies, came close to this amount of Twitter activity during this period. ($\bar{x}$ = 21.8. $\bar{x}$ = 21.6)

Print output also increased over the election period. Interestingly, the rate increased despite the heaviest print Twitter users, sports journalists, tweeting very little. Those who tweeted rarely or

inconsistently used Twitter around the election to communicate with followers about results being reported and reactions for the polling stations. For example, Sonia Sharma, NEC, sent 55/189 (% = 29.1) total tweets on 8-9 June. Nearly all of these were about the election results, her doing her job while reporting from polling areas and discussing the election results with followers. Callum Keown, Oxford Mail sent 55/121 overall tweets in the same period (% = 45.45).

Print journalists tweeted more prevalently during the election period. Broadcast journalists also increased their mean tweet rate over the election period, but this was represented by extremely active tweeting by a few standout individuals.

9.3.2 - Transparency Use

	Medium	N	Mean	Election %	%	Diff %
Live tweeting	Print	21	10.38	43.44	29.69	+13.75
	Broadcast	31	6.48	21.75	16.59	+5.16
Minor opining	Print	21	13.38	57.39	19.75	+37.64
	Broadcast	31	16.03	53.61	8.99	+44.62
Major opining	Print	21	.52	1.98	6.41	-4.43
	Broadcast	31	.9	3.03	9.23	-6.20
Linking	Print	21	5.76	29.56	11.55	+18.01
	Broadcast	31	7.97	26.64	14.60	+12.04
Discussion	Print	21	2.24	8.55	15.38	-6.83
	Broadcast	31	4.55	15.24	15.81	-0.57
Job talking	Print	21	.81	5.29	3.14	+2.15
	Broadcast	31	2.23	7.42	10.55	-3.13
Personal	Print	21	1.52	8.18	4.91	+3.27
	Broadcast	31	4.35	14.55	19.05	-4.50
Retweets	Print	21	2.14	25.97	28.56	-2.59
	Broadcast	31	12.87	43.22	38.91	+4.31

Fig 9.28 - Sit Var: Transparency Practice Mean and Percentage

Fig 9.28 shows the mean usage of each transparency variable during the election period, for both groups and the percentage of use made up in those tweets. This was then compared to the prevalence rates from the overall data to answer **RQ2: How does reporting on events impact journalistic transparency practices?**

Fig 9.29 shows the results of the SSA for the tweets sent around the election. These results were cross referenced with the prevalence data to identify defining characteristics of transparency use on Twitter. The situational variable SSA results indicate similar results to the overall data: Print journalists primarily use Twitter for one-way communication. Broadcast

journalists tend to use Twitter to express opinion, two-way discussions with followers, and to

share information.

Fig 9.29 - Situational Variable SSA Results

9.3.3 - Effects on print transparency practices

During the election period, print reporters increased the rates of their two defining practices from the overall analysis; MinO and Live tweeting. **Fig 9.28** shows an increase in the rates of both around the election. The group also increased their rate of linking, using the practice at a higher rate than broadcast journalists.

This information is verified when analysing the outcome of the SSA (**fig 9.29**) for the tweets around the election. Similar to the overall data set (**fig 9.6**), minO and live tweeting are closely associated, meaning journalists who use one are likely using the other. Print reporters utilised these practices at a higher rate, minO in particular. During the five days surrounding the election, the transparent practice of reporting with limited opinion was used at a 37% higher rate than the overall analysis. Many of minO tweets were about exit polls and snippets of surprising or interesting interviews.

Linking became more closely associated with print journalists during the election period. The SSA found the variables to be closely associated and the practice was used at a higher rate around these dates by print reporters. Addressed in **chapter 9.2.5**, the practices being shown in this way are consistent with how print journalists reported around the election, by reporting on the local races from local voting precincts. These tweets, particularly on the day of the election, were live tweets about what was happening at polling stations, and links to results and stories about elections in surrounding areas. Broadcast journalists reported on the national aspects of

the election, leading to different transparency practices being used in the days around the

election.

9.3.4 - Changes in broadcast transparency

Similar to shifts in practice seen by print journalists, broadcast reporters increased the rates of their defining practices from the overall analysis. Retweets, which were the most used transparency practice by broadcast reporters in the overall data set, were used at a higher rate by the group during the days around the election. Transparency practices closely associated with print journalist's use of Twitter, minO, live tweeting, and linking also increased in the broadcast group. This illustrates the findings of the SSA, those likely to have used one practice, are likely to use the other. With such large increases in usage of these practices during the election period, the results suggest that situational variables do have an effect on the use of transparency practices by reporters in the sample.

Retweeting

The use of retweets by broadcast journalists increased around the election dates (+4.31%). This provides further evidence that retweeting is a defining transparency practice of broadcast journalists. This group of reporters is more likely to act as a gatewatcher of information, passing along information to their followers through a retweet, than those working in print newsrooms. During the election period, many of those retweets were tweets of colleagues and others covering the election from national perspectives, rather than focusing on the outcomes of local races occurring in the region of the reporter.

Personal / Discussion

The use of personal tweets by broadcast journalists dropped slightly during the election period (-4.50%) compared to the overall data set. However, reporters in this group still utilised the practice in over a quarter of tweets sent during the 5-day subset (% = 25.97).

This suggests that despite a national election occurring, broadcast reporters still used Twitter as a mix of personal and professional media. An event occurring does not seem to greatly influence the use of what has been shown to be a defining transparency practice for broadcast journalists. However, the slight decrease may indicate that when an important event is occurring, broadcast journalists move away from discussing themselves and concentrate more on reporting on the event itself. Further support for this can be seen in the increased use of minor opining for broadcast reporters during the election. This can be evidenced by the SSA plot (**fig 9.29**) which shows the personal transparency practice to be far removed from minO and live tweets. This implies that those who use personalising tweets are unlikely to use the traits associated with print reporters. These results are similar to those found in the overall data set.

Again reflecting the overall data set, the use of personalising tweets was associated with the use of discussion tweets. The use of these held steady between the overall data set and the sub-set, indicating that broadcast reporters are likely to continue discussions with followers during breaking news situations and during normal reporting. It appears this is a characteristic that is closely associated with how broadcast journalists ulitise Twitter within their practice.

Minor Opining

While not identified as a characteristic of broadcast reporters within the SSA or the content analysis, the increased use of the minor opining transparency practice by broadcast reporters during the election period should not be ignored. Minor opining became the most prevalently used transparency practice by those in the broadcast group between 5th and 9th June (% = 53.61). This was the least used transparency practice in the overall data set, with an increased use of 44.66%.

This implies a change in Twitter use around the election. While still using Twitter as a personal media, broadcast journalists were reporting much more information during this time, often providing some comment around what they were reporting. Much of this was comments around the national election updates. Very little of the reporting updates concerned local races, which will be explained further in the next chapter.

9.3.5 - National vs. local

When coding the situational variable tweets, the researcher noted that print and broadcast newsrooms tend to cover election nights differently. Print reporters in the sample were often at the polling stations, tweeting regular updates about exit polls, comments from politicians, polling results and more reaction. Conversely broadcast journalists had a tendency to cover elections from the newsroom, providing less commentary around the local elections, but rather tweeting about the election from a national perspective.

National elections in the UK are made up of hundreds of local races which together, have a national importance. Journalistically, this means that elections can be covered in two distinctly different manners. Reporters can cover the election from a local perspective, detailing the candidates running for election in the coverage area. Conversely, an election can be covered from a national perspective, detailing what an election may mean in a national or global picture.

Fig 9.31 shows tweets sent on the day of the election and the following day. Print journalists showed a tendency to tweet about the local races, while those working in broadcast showed a tendency to focus on the national picture. The tweets coded here are tweets only about the election.

Title	Total Election tweets	Local Tweets	National Tweets	Local tweet rate
BBC	159	26	133	16.35%
ITV	409	180	229	44.01%
Print	216	154	62	71.30%

Fig 9.31 - Election: National vs Local Tweeting

The reason for this trend is not clear from the data. Previous research suggests the reason could be similar to the reasons why newspapers are full of sports, news readers of local news cannot get the information about local sports teams from any other outlet, unless local media outlets cover them (Wanta, 2003). It is the same for local election coverage. National outlets do not have the time to dedicate to each individual race around the country. However, local print journalists, only interested in covering a particular area, do have the time to cover individual parliamentary races with in-depth reporting. And as the data shows, that reporting is being done on Twitter.

Many print journalists observed for this study were stationed at polling houses on the night of the election, reporting any information about the count or events happening at their location, live on Twitter. The platform allowed reporters to tweet results and information as it came into the voting precinct, rather than waiting to report via traditional platforms. This accounted for the high percentage of tweeting local election coverage, rather than the national coverage, as many broadcast journalists did.

BBC journalists chose to tweet about the national picture of the election at a much higher rate than their ITV broadcast counterparts. This is mainly due to the fact that none of the observed BBC journalists in this sample were deployed to local voting precincts. This would make it difficult to report on the results as they came in. It also hints at how the BBC covers elections, showing that they believe that the outcomes and effects of the national election picture are more important than live tweeting election results before they can be aired on TV.

It is also important to remember that the national television broadcasts on BBC and ITV cover the results of each voting precinct, often showing the results live or taped on the national feed. This lessens the need for journalists to be reporting live from each voting precinct. Local and regional print titles do not have this option, making the need for live reporting much more needed for the followers of print reporters throughout the UK.

9.4 - Motivations for Transparency

The sequential design of this mixed-methods analysis meant the researcher followed up the quantitative analysis with qualitative interviews. These were coded using a thematic analysis to identify themes explored by participants to answer **RQ3: Do local and journalists use transparency practices on Twitter, with the intent to build trust with users?** The interviews were conducted with 10 of the journalists from the sample, five from broadcast newsrooms and five from print. The results of the thematic analysis, discussed in **chapter 8**, found several connecting themes about how local and regional reporters in the UK view Twitter within their journalistic practice, and the motivations for using transparency.

The analysis found several motivations for using transparency on Twitter, including trust building with followers. The interviews illustrated several motivations journalists have for using transparency on Twitter:

- Building trust and personal relationships

- Direct communication

- Brand building

The conversation around transparency practices being used as a way to build trust with followers was difficult with some respondents. Four out of the 10 interviewees were not aware that they did use transparency practices in their Twitter content. This lack of awareness around the concept of transparency in reporting means intent to build trust with these practices may be low.

Richard Youle: *"I know I try to be a transparent person and a transparent journalist. On Twitter, I just try to tell people what I know, and because I have some space, how I know it."*

Elliw Mai: *"I think pushing out material is my primary focus on Twitter. But if something warrants a reply, I won't hesitate. If somebody asks for more information on something and I have it and know it's correct, I will share it. For example, a colleague will sometimes interact with a Tweet, I won't hesitate to add to that either. It may not be because I am trying to be transparent. It's just what I do."*

Abbie Jones: *"It's my job. It's nothing more or less than that. I'm a news journalist. I'm there to break the news and tell people about it as fast as possible. That's how I use Twitter and that's what I use it for. It's the fastest medium in order to show people information and what is going on at the scene or at ground level. If there is some big breaking story, people are doing searches about Manchester Bomb and finding out what is going on now. I want to show that to them as fast as possible."*

Ann O'Connor: *"It is the purest form of what we do. Here I am, look at it. There is no corporate side to it, there's no other influences. It's here it is, this is the fire, here is the crash, here is the murder scene, here is the council meeting, look it at. I think this is one of the best uses of Twitter, you can really get stuff out there. I loved working in radio before coming to TV because it was so immediate and so quick. Twitter is one of those fantastic tools as a journalist. You can literally get out of the car and show people what is going on."*

Consistently reporters talked about their transparency use in this way. What many journalists viewed as pragmatic decisions and exploring the potential of the platform, are transparency practices. These practices have become normalised in the field to a point that the actions do not seem extraordinary or something even worth labelling. Using transparency on Twitter is just a part of doing the job.

When the researcher identified what can be considered transparent practices on Twitter, several themes were identified in the responses about motivations for transparency use on Twitter. While transparency may not be universally utilised with the intention of trust building, it is a particular motivation amongst many. The most prominent themes included :

- Building trust / relationships with users
- Brand building
    - Personal or professional

While these were the most prevalent, to view them as completely independent to one another would be inaccurate. Reporters often linked brand building and building trust as one action.

Abbie Jones: *I want my brand to be a trusted source of news. Not anything else. When people see my name, I want them to think the tweet next to it can be trusted and is accurate, timely news."*

Ann O'Connor: *"When the user is scrolling through their Twitter timeline, they see a hundred posts but then they see Ann O'Connor come up and they know what to expect. I have no interest in being anything other than impartial and informative. I have no interest in people knowing more about me as a person or a reporter. I just want to tell people what is happening."*

Joel Adams: *"When my name comes up on a Twitter feed, I want them to think either: What interesting event is he bringing to my attention or has a take on, or what news story has he covered that he is bringing to my attention…I think they have a good sense of who Joel Adams, reporter is on my Twitter and that is what they have a right to be interested in. I have no idea if Bob Woodward is gay, straight, married or enjoys jalapeño poppers and I don't care. I don't care really how many followers I have. I find it mildly amusing when my followers increase because I think that the more impact and influence I have, the better reporter I can be… What I'm doing on Twitter is either putting out information to people who are wondering what Joel Adams is up to today or much more likely, people who follow me and are interested in the goings on in Brighton. I won't attract their attention by, metaphorically, standing on a street corner shouting go to the website, and I don't have that kind of reach. But I can reach a number of people by tweeting directly about a particular thing at that meeting."*

Journalists are not using transparency on Twitter purely as a trust builder with followers, and nor is it explicitly being used to build larger audiences. Many journalists agreed that if they changed the way they tweet, they would be able to attract a larger following. But there was an

unwillingness to do so. The responses implied that Tweeting like a user who wants to be popular is not journalistic. However, this does not preclude the reporters from showing personality on Twitter, to give followers a sense of who they are.

Brain Ellis: *"In our job, humour doesn't exist in the same quantity it did in newspapers. Today it's humorless in papers and I think with Twitter in particular you can have a bit of a laugh with current events."*

Ann O'Connor: *"I tend not to tweet what I've been eating and where I've been on holiday. Possibly you show your personality through your taste. What you like, what bands you like. Like a person, you RT people. I won't talk about my kids online and I try not to say where I live. I think broadcasters are just more used to people seeing them and knowing what their sense of humour might be. Print journalists are a bit more traditional in the fact that they don't see themselves as the story."*

Joel Adams: *"I was influenced by good reporters and the way they write and the way they tweet. Most reputable print journalists don't tweet about personal things. They might send personal tweets but they don't tweet about personal things. Print reporters particularly might tweet, "Great result by Brighton this afternoon." Or "What fantastic to be at Amex for 2-1 win over Man U" But they wouldn't tweet "God, adulting is hard sometimes, I'm fighting with my landlord about the shower." Younger reporters and broadcast reporters and online only reporters and more female reporters in my experience are more comfortable tweeting those*

personal details and have just grown up in a world where you just put stuff online in an unfiltered way."

The qualitative interviews found that expectations of how journalists should be tweeting is varied. This has an effect on not just the output of those reporters, but how they feel about using Twitter within their journalistic practice. While trust building appears to be part of the motivation for journalists using transparency practices on Twitter, the responses suggest that reporters would prefer to be seen as a trusted brand of information, rather than a known individual.

10 - Conclusions

The analysis concludes that Twitter is a platform for choice. The choices are reflective of how closely reporters stick to traditional, objective reporting principles expected in local and regional newspapers and broadcasts around the UK, or choose to embrace transparency and openness on a platform away from editorial oversight. In this study, reporters from print newsrooms were shown to hold to traditional practices on Twitter, even when Twitter offered them the opportunity not to.

The analysis of 17,513 tweets of 52 local and regional journalists in the UK shows print journalists were more likely to use Twitter for one-way communication with followers. The defining practices of print reporters were live tweeting and minor opining. While transparent, these tweets were filled with objective reporting. Print reporters were less likely to share personal information or details, to 'lift the curtain' (Karlsson, 2011) of the journalistic process, or engage with followers. This is consistent with the findings of the journalist's in Singer's (2005) study. Both studies found that journalists will hold to traditional norms, despite more journalistic freedom.

Conversely, the broadcast journalists in the sample were less likely to use Twitter for reporting, but as a personal social media for sharing and discussions with followers. The SSA, cross-referenced with the content analysis data, indicated that personalising and retweeting were two defining transparent practices of the broadcast group. It was also found that where print reporters used a few transparency practices heavily and others almost not at all, broadcast

reporters used a greater mix of the practices more often. The group used major opining, job talking, discussion and linking transparency practices at higher rates.

Journalist's are using transparency. It is a normal working practice for journalists working in both print and broadcast newsrooms in the UK. However, transparency practices are not exclusively used on Twitter to build trust. Transparency has become so ingrained within the working practices that during qualitative interviews, some did not identify their transparency practices on Twitter as transparency. They were 'just doing their job.' The transparent practices used on Twitter to report, communicate, and share with followers are woven into how local and regional reporters perform their job. What differs between the two groups is how they are using these practices.

During qualitative interviews conducted after the data analysis, journalist's provided a variety of reasons for using transparency on Twitter. While building trust with followers was a motivation for using Twitter, it was not the primary reason for using transparency. Reporters discussed that they do want to be trusted sources for information on Twitter, away from the brands they are employed by. The difference lay in how far each reporter was willing to break from objectivity practices in order to achieve that. Some believed the best way to build trust was by factual and accurate reporting. Others believed Twitter should be an extension of themselves, showing personality and updating followers about what is happening in their personal and professional lives.

Therefore, this study finds that journalist's are attempting to build trust on Twitter via

transparency. Normative practices within each industry appears to have an impact on how

journalist's utilise their Twitter feed, away from deadlines, word count and editorial oversight.

Broadcast reporters use more transparency practices in their Twitter practice at higher rates

than those working in print newsrooms. It is not clear from this study whether this is due to

training journalist's are receiving prior to starting their career, on the job training or differing

traditional norms and practices in print and broadcast newsrooms. Many interviewees in this

study noted that training regarding the best practices for utilising Twitter were minimal, or

non-existent. A study illustrating the effects of training and Twitter output may help to highlight

whether transparency practices would be used more consistently, if a universal education was

available for local and regional reporters.

10.1 - Limitations and recommendations

A limitation of this study was the uneven group sizes (print = 21, broadcast = 31). This meant the data was skewed, making tests which compare means to find statistical significance inappropriate. Mann-Whitney U tests to compare the medians found only one significant difference in the data. Print journalists' use of the minO transparency practice was found to be significant compared to those working in broadcast.

The use of the SSA plot to find how variables associate with one another, combined with the content analysis and Mann-Whitney U outcomes, meant that finding meaningful results was still possible. The SSA is not typically used in journalism studies but when used in tandem with other tests, can provide insights that would not be found by simply using tests of significance, especially when studying multiple variables. The researcher would recommend using even group sizes in any replication or similar study, so that statistical significance tests provide reliable results. However, the use of the SSA plot is also recommended, as it.provides further evidence for how the variables associate with one another.

Further work is needed to understand journalism practice in local and regional markets around the world. There is abundant literature on the transparency practices of the most followed or most well-known journalists and celebrities. What is less understood are the practices and motivations of social media use from the reporters working in local communities, newsrooms across the UK, and around the world. Where reporters working in different markets and

mediums perform their job differently, Twitter offers a uniformity to journalism practice. More studies like this one, may continue to illustrate how journalists are using Twitter in different ways, despite the consistency offered by the platform.

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