

VARIATIONS ON A THEME: THE PROFESSIONAL ROLE CONCEPTIONS OF PRINT AND ONLINE NEWSPAPER JOURNALISTS

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A national survey (N=655) examining the professional role conceptions of print and online newspaper journalists revealed the print group perceived the Interpretive/Investigative role as significantly more important than the online group. No significant differences were found between the groups in their perceptions of the Adversarial and Populist Mobilizer roles. Results were mixed for the Disseminator role. The online group rated getting information to the public as quickly as possible as significantly more important than the print group.

The Internet has become a major source of news and information.¹ Research shows that 35% of Americans and 57% of American college graduates go online for news at least once a week.² In addition, the potential online news audience is growing at an amazing rate. There are two million new Internet users in the United States each month.³ As of March 2004, there were more than 114 million active Internet users and more than 209 million with Internet access.⁴ Web traffic to the leading Internet news sites increased 70% from May 2002 to October 2003, and it has been predicted that the percentage of Americans who go online for news will increase to nearly three-quarters of the population by 2007.⁵

This rapid growth is all the more remarkable when one considers that it was little more than a decade ago that the first online newspaper service appeared. In May 1992 the *Chicago Tribune*, in partnership with America Online, launched Chicago Online.⁶ Other newspapers quickly followed. By 1998 more than 1,600 newspapers had established an online presence including nearly all of the large circulation newspapers in the nation.⁷ *Newslink*, one of the leading directories of online media,⁸ currently lists more than 4,000 U.S. newspapers with online sites, including nearly 1,200 dailies.⁹

Not surprisingly, as the Web began establishing its presence as a news source, scholars began exploring this new form of journalism.¹⁰ However, the topic areas addressed have primarily concerned issues of content and the audience, particularly regarding credibility. Several scholars and media critics have noted that inaccurate content is more

likely to be posted on Internet news sites, due to the speed at which a story can be posted online.¹¹ These errors can damage a journalistic organization's credibility.¹² Brill goes so far as to say that the "rush to production has allowed rumor to pass as reporting and electronic processing to pass for editing."¹³ A number of studies have also examined audience perceptions of the credibility of Internet information.¹⁴

Singer and Thiel note that the focus on audiences and content might be explained by the continuing influence of the media effects tradition in mass communication research.¹⁵ While audience research in the online environment is no doubt worthwhile, less scholarly attention has been paid to the online journalist, even though the Internet could prompt a fundamental shift in the journalist's role in the communication process.¹⁶ Kovach and Rosenstiel believe that because of the Internet, the concept of journalists' applying judgment as to what constitutes news is more important than ever. The journalist in the new millennium, they say, no longer decides what information the public should know. Instead, he or she is helping audiences make sense of it.¹⁷ With journalists, in essence, functioning as forum leaders, and given that some have said that the values of online journalists are reflected in the content produced, it seems even more important to study these journalists.¹⁸ Research investigating how journalists view themselves is important to our understanding of the workings of the profession.¹⁹ Indeed, the foreword to Weaver and Wilhoit's *The American Journalist in the 1990s* notes that "If who American journalists are influences, shapes and biases the news, we should care very much about the current inventory of this species."²⁰ This project seeks to add to knowledge in this area by assessing how online newspaper journalists view their professional roles and comparing their responses to those of print newspaper journalists.

Theoretical Framework. This study is grounded in the large body of literature examining the sociology of news work, which documents the influence of media routines along with organizational and professional norms.²¹

Media routines, the "patterned, routinized, repeated practices and forms that media workers use to do their jobs," are responsible for much of the news content in the mass media.²² Fishman calls routines the "crucial factor which determines how newsmen construe the world of activities they confront."²³ From this perspective, news itself is the outcome of routines²⁴ and news stories are not naturally defined as such, but instead are occurrences journalists have learned to view in certain ways in order to define them as predictable events that can be handled through routines.²⁵ The ability to implement routines, according to Tuchman, serves to make journalists professionals.²⁶ Similarly, Soloski terms news professionalism as knowledge of the "norms and standards of behavior" used by journalists to perform their jobs.²⁷ He says news organizations rely on the interaction between news professionalism and their own specific policies to establish a framework and boundaries for the behavior of journalists.²⁸

Literature Review

In his seminal study, "Social Control in the Newsroom," Breed found that news organizations never specifically outlined their policies to journalists; instead, policy was enforced indirectly and subtly, learned through on-the-job-socialization which encourages the formation of reference group behavior whereby journalists identify with and share the norms of executives and senior staffers of a news organization.²⁹

Professional Roles of Journalists. Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, in a nationwide survey, addressed journalists' beliefs regarding their roles in newsgathering.³⁰ They found that some journalists were proponents of a "neutral" role, seeing themselves as an "impartial transmission link dispensing information to the public."³¹ These journalists felt their jobs were best accomplished by adhering to the norms of objectivity and reporting accurate, factual, and verifiable information. Other journalists, however, saw themselves as "participants," believing it was their responsibility to play a more active role in sifting through the information provided by sources to find the "real" story.

Neutral journalists viewed their primary functions as getting information to the public as quickly as possible, staying away from stories where information cannot be verified, concentrating on news that is of interest to the widest possible audience, and providing entertainment and relaxation. Participants saw their primary functions as investigating claims and statements made by the government, providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems, discussing national policy, and developing the intellectual and cultural interests of the public.

Overall, however, their results suggest that the majority of journalists endorse elements of both perspectives. For example, only 8.5% were predominantly participant in their outlook and 9.7% were predominantly neutral. What the researchers termed "balanced views" were held by 35.4% of journalists; 25.1% were moderately neutral and 21.4% were moderately participant.

Weaver and Wilhoit repeated many of the same questions posed by Johnstone and colleagues.³² Their analysis came up with three categories of professional role conceptions for journalists: (1) interpretive; (2) disseminator; and (3) adversarial. Nearly 60% of journalists scored high for the interpretive role, while nearly half also did so for the disseminator role. Only 17% of respondents scored high for the adversary role. An even smaller percentage (2%) scored high for only one category, while most journalists tended to view their roles as a combination of interpreter and disseminator.

A decade later, Weaver and Wilhoit came to similar conclusions.³³ Respondents were asked thirteen questions about their conceptions of "things the media try to do today." Through factor analysis, the responses were aggregated into four attitudinal clusters: (1) interpretive/investigative; (2) disseminator; (3) adversarial; and (4) populist mobilizer.

The interpretive/investigative role conception was the leading category with nearly 63% of journalists rating it as very important. This role conception is a combination of three dimensions: investigating government claims, analyzing and interpreting complex problems, and discussing public policy in a timely manner.

The disseminator role conception was very important to 51% of respondents. This function was a blending of two dimensions: getting information to the public quickly and avoiding stories with unverifiable facts. The adversarial role conception was rated important by 18%. This role conception consisted of being constantly skeptical of both government and business interests.

The populist mobilizer role conception, rated as very important by 6% of respondents, meshed together four dimensions: developing cultural interests of the public, providing entertainment, setting the political agenda, and allowing ordinary people to express their views.

The overall findings of the study concluded that most journalists saw themselves as a combination of two, and sometimes three, of the role conceptions. For example, 33% of respondents scored high in both the interpretive/investigative and disseminator role conceptions.

Studies of Online Journalists. All the studies discussed in the previous section were conducted before the development of the World Wide Web. Therefore, online journalists were not included. However, several studies of the roles and professional practices of online journalists have appeared in recent years.

Arant and Anderson surveyed the online editors of 203 daily newspapers in an effort to measure their views regarding ethical values and to see if those values differed because of the online environment at online daily newspapers.³⁴ Nearly all (98%) respondents agreed that journalism ethics and standards should be the same for both print and online publishing. However, almost half (47%) said that the high speed at which a story can be posted online has cut down the time spent on verifying the facts of a story before it is published. Thirty percent reported that the online sites of daily newspapers are not as likely to follow the general ethical standards as are the print versions of daily newspapers.

A pair of studies conducted by Singer offer some evidence that online journalists see their gatekeeping roles as changing, rather than disappearing, with the advent of the Internet.³⁵ In a case study of online personnel at three newspapers, Singer found that online journalists see themselves as credible interpreters of the quality of the large volume of information available to readers online.³⁶ Through content analysis, Singer discovered that the online editions of six Colorado newspapers were much more likely to run local stories and leave out nonlocal stories, thereby giving readers a much narrower view of the world.³⁷ She argued that by doing so, online journalists are giving up a crucial gatekeeping function. "In a world as tightly interconnected and interdependent as ours has become," she wrote, "we are poorly served by a myopic view of the place in which we live."³⁸

Brill surveyed the professional role conceptions of sixty-six journalists working for twelve online newspaper sites.³⁹ Using questions adapted from the studies of Weaver and Wilhoit,⁴⁰ she compared her results to those of newspaper journalists in the 1996 study. Brill found close alignment in how both groups viewed elements of the disseminator role conception. Half of each group said it was very important to avoid reporting unverified facts, while 70% of the print journalists and 62% of online

journalists agreed that getting information to the public quickly was very important.

Online journalists were less likely to view elements of both the interpretive/investigative and adversarial role conceptions as very important. For example, only 24% of online journalists viewed investigating government claims as very important, compared with 70% of print journalists. Fifty-four percent of print journalists saw interpreting complex problems as very important, while only 35% of online journalists agreed. This result contrasts with Singer who found online journalists view the interpretive role as crucial to their job.⁴¹ Being an adversary of government officials was deemed very important by 13% of online journalists, while 26% of print journalists felt this way.

Regarding the populist mobilizer role conception, the two groups were closely aligned in three of the four elements. As an example, 59% of online journalists and 52% of print newspaper journalists said it was very important to let ordinary citizens express their views. However, online journalists were more likely (29%) to say it was very important to entertain the audience than were print journalists (16%).

Research Questions. The sociology of newswork literature suggests that, with minor variation, online newspaper journalists working for daily newspapers, as members of “traditional” news organizations, would be subject to the same influences as their counterparts and perhaps have similar professional role conceptions. However, given that much of the research in this area was conducted prior to the development of the Web, and that scholarly research into online journalists is a developing area, no hypotheses are proposed. Instead, the following research questions are examined:

RQ1: What are the professional role conceptions of online newspaper journalists and print newspaper journalists?

RQ2: How do the professional role conceptions of online newspaper journalists compare with those of print newspaper journalists?

Examining the professional role conceptions of these two groups of journalists seems a logical starting point from which additional research could emanate. Furthermore, daily newspapers are the largest employers of journalists in the United States.⁴²

Method

Sample. Closely guided by measures employed by Weaver and Wilhoit, the sample for this study was drawn from the population of journalists working for English-language mainstream general interest daily newspapers in the United States.⁴³

Weaver and Wilhoit define journalists as “those who [have] responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other information—all full-time reporters, writers, correspondents, col-

umnists, photojournalists, news people and editors."⁴⁴ But, as previously noted, their study took place before the advent of the Internet, and therefore, did not take into account online journalists. Thus, the question becomes one of defining what makes an online journalist.

Deuze argues that online journalism is distinct from other forms of journalism because its technological component serves as a determining factor in terms of an operational definition. For example, the online journalist has to make decisions on which formats are the best to use to tell a particular story, must allow for options of interactivity, and also has to consider issues of hypertextuality, such as the connecting of the story to other stories and archives.⁴⁵ While this is true, the definition offered by Weaver and Wilhoit can nonetheless also be applied to online journalists.⁴⁶ Allowing for interactivity and hypertextuality, and deciding which media formats best serve a story certainly seems consistent with Weaver and Wilhoit's "responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories."

This study thus defines an online newspaper journalist as one who meets Weaver and Wilhoit's criteria for being defined as a journalist⁴⁷ and whose job primarily entails working on the online edition of a daily newspaper with the job title editor, producer, or reporter.⁴⁸ Similarly, a print newspaper journalist is defined as one who meets Weaver and Wilhoit's criteria for being defined as a journalist⁴⁹ and whose job primarily entails working on the print edition of a daily newspaper.

The sample was drawn from the 1,191 daily newspapers listed as of February 2003 in *Newslink*, a major database listing of online newspapers.⁵⁰ The study was designed to provide a systematic probability sample of daily newspapers proportionate to the size of daily circulation.⁵¹ Print circulation figures were used, because, as Singer notes, it is likely that familiarity with the print edition of a newspaper is what leads readers to seek it out online.⁵²

While there is currently no published directory of online newspaper staff members, Singer found that most provide listings of both print and online staff members, with e-mail contact information on their Web sites.⁵³ Web sites of each newspaper were visited to see if such a list was available. When no list was available, the researcher contacted the newspapers to see if one could be provided. If a newspaper failed to provide a staff list, stories on the newspaper's Web site were randomly examined to see if contact information for the reporter was available.⁵⁴

Data Collection Procedures. Data for this project were gathered via a Web-based survey. These types of surveys have been shown to be an effective method of gathering information from people (such as journalists) who have e-mail addresses and access to the World Wide Web.⁵⁵ The author contracted with Survey Professionals, Inc., a company based in Provo, Utah, to host the survey on the World Wide Web and warehouse the data from the survey until it was completed.

A total of 3,330 invitations to participate in the survey (2,050 print newspaper journalists and 1,280 online newspaper journalists) were sent via e-mail from 15 July 2003 to 25 August 2003.⁵⁶ Of these 3,330 invitations, 325 invitations to the print newspaper journalist sample and 119 to

the online newspaper journalist sample were undeliverable for a total of 444 (13.3%). Additionally, 51 individuals (37 print and 14 online) who received the invitation declined to participate.

Within three days after sending the survey invitations, an e-mail message containing the URL of the survey was e-mailed to the sample. In total, 2,835 messages (1,688 to the print sample and 1,147 to the online sample) directing recipients to the survey URL were sent between 17 July 2003 and 27 August 2003. Two reminder messages also containing the survey URL were sent one and two weeks respectively after the initial mailing.

A total of 656 responses were received, for a 23.1% response rate. Only one response was incomplete to the point where it could not be used for analysis and was eliminated from the study, resulting in a final sample size of 655 (456 print newspaper journalists and 199 online newspaper journalists). Responses were obtained from 271 newspapers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The distribution of the sample is similar demographically to results of a 2002 census of daily newspaper employees conducted for the American Society of Newspaper Editors.⁵⁷ For example, 61% of respondents in this study were male, compared to 63% in the ASNE study. Minorities in both studies made up 12% of the sample. The sample distribution also corresponds favorably to earlier studies of journalists in terms of regional representation and newspaper circulation size.⁵⁸

The data reported here are taken from a larger study.⁵⁹ The professional role conceptions of both groups were determined from their assessments of 13 statements, taken directly from Weaver and Wilhoit's 1996 study, asking how important they think "a number of things the media do or try to do today" are.⁶⁰ It was from these statements that Weaver and Wilhoit came up with the four major role conceptions of journalists.⁶¹ The level of importance respondents assigned to each statement was measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=not really important, 7= extremely important).

Creating New Variables. To answer the research questions of this study, four summative indices were created, each named after one of the professional role conceptions addressed by Weaver and Wilhoit.⁶² The means for the individual dimensions of each index are reported in Table 1.

The Interpretive/Investigative variable summed each of the scores from three questions which ask how important it is that the news media (1) provide analysis and/or interpretation of complex problems; (2) investigate claims and/or statements made by the government; and (3) discuss national policy while it is still being developed. Cronbach's alpha for this variable was .76 for the print sample and .71 for the online sample.

The Disseminator variable summed the scores from two questions which ask how important it is that the news media (1) get information to the public quickly; and (2) stay away from stories where factual content cannot be verified. Cronbach's alpha for the print and online samples was .30 and .28 respectively, well below recommended values.

TABLE 1
Means of Dimensions of the Professional Role Conceptions

Role Conception Dimension	Print (n=456)	s.d.	Online (n=199)	s.d.
Interpretive/Investigative				
Investigate Official Claims	6.32	1.00	5.95	1.06
Analyze Complex Problems	6.29	1.01	5.92	1.10
Discuss National Policy	5.70	1.25	5.32	1.30
Disseminator				
Getting Information to the Public Quickly	6.03	.97	6.46	.70
Avoiding Unverifiable Facts	5.65	1.51	5.86	1.31
Adversarial				
Adversary of Government Officials	4.73	1.65	4.53	1.63
Adversary of Business	4.41	1.63	4.29	1.61
Populist Mobilizer				
Allow Public to Express Views	5.59	1.33	5.72	1.51
Develop Cultural Interests of Public	4.82	1.42	5.01	1.36
Provide Entertainment	4.69	1.35	5.02	3.09
Set the Political Agenda	3.23	1.61	3.09	1.53

Note: 1=not really important, 7=extremely important

Therefore, this variable was discarded and the two dimensions of this variable were analyzed individually.

The Adversarial variable summed the scores from two questions which ask how important it is that the news media (1) be an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions; and (2) be an adversary of businesses by being constantly skeptical of their actions. Cronbach's alpha for this variable was .95 for the print sample and .98 for the online sample.

The Populist Mobilizer variable summed each of the scores from four questions which ask how important it is that the news media (1) provide entertainment and/or relaxation; (2) develop intellectual and/or cultural interests of the public; (3) set the political agenda; and (4) give ordinary people a chance to express their views of public affairs. Cronbach's alpha for this variable was .60 for the print sample and .67 for the online sample.

The mean scores for the Interpretive/Investigative, Adversarial, and Populist Mobilizer role conception indices were then calculated, as were the means of both dimensions of the Disseminator role conception

variable. Then independent sample *t*-tests were performed. Table 2 displays the results of these analyses.

Results

As shown in Table 2,⁶³ the mean Interpretive/Investigative role conception score for print newspaper journalists was 6.10 (out of a possible 7) with a standard deviation of .89. For online newspaper journalists the mean Interpretive/Investigative role conception score was 5.74 with a standard deviation of .92. The independent samples T-test revealed a significant difference between the groups ($t=3.76$, $d.f.=653$, $p < .001$) with print newspaper journalists perceiving this role conception as significantly more important than online newspaper journalists.

As discussed earlier, the two questions constituting the Disseminator role conception variable were analyzed separately. Table 1 shows that online newspaper journalists scored higher in both dimensions of this role conception than print newspaper journalists. The mean for the question asking the importance of getting information to the public quickly was 6.46 (1=not really important, 7=extremely important) for the online group with a standard deviation of .70. The mean score for print newspaper journalists was 6.03 with a standard deviation of .97. However, while both groups placed high importance on this dimension of the Disseminator role conception, Table 2 results show that the difference was significant ($t = -4.30$, $d.f.=653$, $p < .001$). The online newspaper journalists perceive this dimension of the Disseminator role conception to be significantly more important than print newspaper journalists.

The second dimension of the Disseminator role conception asks the importance of staying away from stories where the factual content cannot be verified. The mean for the print group was 5.65 with a standard deviation of 1.51. For online newspaper journalists the mean was 5.86 with a standard deviation of 1.31 (Table 1). The independent samples T-test found no significant difference between the groups in their perceptions of this dimension of the Disseminator role conception ($t = -1.29$, $d.f.=653$, $p = .198$).

The mean scores for the Adversarial role conception were 4.62 for print newspaper journalists and 4.35 for online newspaper journalists. The standard deviation for both groups was 1.60. The differences were not significant ($t=1.61$, $d.f.=653$, $p = .108$).

The results were similar for the Populist Mobilizer role conception. The mean for print newspaper journalists was 4.58 with a standard deviation of .90, while the mean was 4.70 with a standard deviation of .91 for online newspaper journalists. Results show no significant difference between the means of the two groups ($t = -1.28$, $d.f.=653$, $p = .202$).

Discussion

This study compared the professional role conceptions of print and online newspaper journalists. As one of the first to survey a national sample of both print and online newspaper journalists, this project found some differences, as well as similarities, between the two groups.

TABLE 2
Means of Role Conception Indices

Role Conception	Print (<i>n</i>=456)	s.d.	Online (<i>n</i>=199)	s.d.	<i>p</i>
Interpretive/ Investigative	6.10	.89	5.74	.92	< .001
Getting Information to the Public Quickly (Disseminator)	6.03	.97	6.46	.70	< .001
Avoiding Stories where Content Cannot Be Verified (Disseminator)	5.65	1.51	5.86	1.31	.198
Adversarial	4.62	1.60	4.35	1.60	.108
Populist Mobilizer	4.58	.90	4.70	.91	.202

Note: d.f.=653. To aid interpretation, means and standard deviations were divided by the number of items in each index, so are all based on a 7-point scale (1=not really important, 7=extremely important).

Both the print and online groups perceived the Interpretive/Investigative and Disseminator role conceptions as more important than the Adversarial and Populist Mobilizer role conceptions. This result is similar to the findings of Weaver and Wilhoit.⁶⁴

Print newspaper journalists, however, rated the Interpretive/Investigative role conception as significantly more important than online newspaper journalists. This result is interesting in light of the fact that the Interpretive/Investigative role conception is closely aligned with the recommendations of the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press in 1947, and thus can be seen as one which espouses more "traditional" journalistic values.⁶⁵ It appears that online newspaper journalists do not hold these "traditional" values in as high regard and that there may be differences in conceptions of newsworthiness in the online environment.

A potential reason for this difference is offered by Boczkowski in his recent analysis of online newspapers. "Rather than arising mostly from exchanges between reporters and their sources and negotiations between reporters and editors," he wrote, "the news online seems to be also significantly informed by the relationships among the other groups that increasingly populate the news world."⁶⁶ The audience, along with advertising and design personnel, have an increased role in online news production, and online journalists may place greater impor-

tance on the goals and values of these groups when assessing newsworthiness.

Online newspaper journalists rated getting information to the public quickly as significantly more important than did print newspaper journalists. Given the speed at which information can be posted online,⁶⁷ it is not surprising that online journalists would perceive this dimension of the Disseminator role conception as very important.

There were no significant differences between the two groups in their perceptions of the importance of staying away from stories where factual content cannot be verified. Both held this dimension of the Disseminator role conception in high regard. This result is somewhat surprising, especially since some concerns have been expressed that online journalists are not as credible as "traditional" journalists and are more likely to report incorrect information.⁶⁸ Perhaps online journalists are simply getting a bad rap from these journalists. Indeed, studies have shown that the public perceives information found on online news sites about as credible as that found via other sources.⁶⁹ Or perhaps, given that this study looked at online newspaper journalists, as opposed to online journalists who work for a Web-only entity, the online journalists in this study are more aware of the traditional concerns and the pitfalls of publishing incorrect information.⁷⁰

There were also no significant differences concerning the Adversarial role conception. Historically, American society thinks of journalists as being "watchdogs" and adversaries of government and big business even though there is some indication that journalists do not necessarily equate the watchdog function with being adversaries.⁷¹ Therefore it is interesting that journalists in this study, in keeping with Weaver and Wilhoit,⁷² only perceive this role conception as moderately important.

The Populist Mobilizer role conception has been called a potential "harbinger of change in the field" of journalism.⁷³ However, no significant differences exist between the two groups in their perceptions of this role conception. Online newspaper journalists, however, did rate providing entertainment (one of the four dimensions of this role conception) as significantly more important ($p=.023$) than print journalists.

Conclusion

While this study has generated some useful findings, it is not without limitations. Response rates for all types of surveys have declined in recent years⁷⁴ and while the 23.1% response rate reported here is in keeping with other studies of online journalists,⁷⁵ the high level of nonresponse is certainly a limitation. There is a possibility that nonrespondents would differ from respondents in their assessments of the questions asked in this study.

Another limitation is the lack of responses from online newspaper journalists. Only 199 online newspaper journalists responded to the survey, which limits the generalizability of the results to the online newspaper journalist population. While it is not possible to report the exact response rate for each group because there is no way of knowing

whether a respondent who was initially targeted as a member of one group was actually a member of the other, it appears that online newspaper journalists were less likely to respond to this survey. Whether this is a trait of online journalists remains to be seen.

This study is also limited by the sampling design. Following the example of Arant and Meyer,⁷⁶ this study was designed to provide a systematic probability sample of daily newspapers proportionate to circulation size. Thus, the larger the circulation, the more survey invitations sent to that paper. However, some newspapers have small online journalistic staffs in relation to print circulation and as a result, were unable to fulfill the number of survey recipients accorded them in the sampling design. This limited the number of online newspaper journalists receiving the survey.

Despite the above limitations, this study adds to our knowledge of both print and online newspaper journalists. The overall results are mixed and certainly not definitive, but the findings do suggest some similarities. As noted earlier, while there was a significant difference between the groups regarding the Interpretive/Investigative role conception, this role conception was held in high regard by both groups, as were the dimensions of the Disseminator role conception.

Furthermore, both groups placed less overall importance on both the Adversarial and Populist Mobilizer role conceptions. Perhaps an underlying reason for these similarities is that the online journalists in this study were associated with a "traditional" media outlet: the daily newspaper. The large body of research of the sociology of news work suggests that journalists discover and internalize norms and values of the profession as well as those of the organization for which they are working. Similarly, Boczkowski contends that the interactions and relationship between the online and print newsrooms of newspapers play an important role in the production of online news.⁷⁷ But, despite all this, there are some significant differences. The question is: why? Are online journalists fundamentally different from traditional journalists? Furthermore, are online journalists working for Web-only media outlets different from those working for the online operation of a more "traditional" entity and does working for that "traditional" entity lessen the differences? Research into the dynamics of the online and "traditional" newsrooms of media organizations may offer some insight, along with inquiries into what factors (such as the audience) influence professional role conceptions. In the meantime, much remains to be discovered and answered.

NOTES

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34. David M. Arant and Janna Q. Anderson, "Newspaper Online Editors Support Traditional Ethics," *Newspaper Research Journal* 22 (fall 2001): 57-69.

35. Jane B. Singer, "Still Guarding the Gate? The Newspaper Journalist's Role in an Online World," *Convergence: The Journal of Research Into New Media Technologies* 3 (spring 1997): 72-89; Jane B. Singer, "The Metro Wide Web: Changes in Newspapers' Gatekeeping Role Online," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 78 (spring 2001): 65-80.

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40. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.
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44. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 248.
45. Mark Deuze, "Online Journalism: Modeling the First Generation of News Media on the World Wide Web," *First Monday* 3 (December 2001), <http://www.firstmonday.dk/issue6_10/deuze> (15 November 2002).
46. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.
47. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.
48. McAdams interviewed online newspaper staff members and found that those holding the job titles of "editor" and "producer" made the types of journalistic decisions in keeping with this study's definition of a journalist. See Mindy J. McAdams, "Report on Editorial-Advertising Roles in Online Newspaper Staffs," *American Society of Newspaper Editors* (1 January 2000), <http://www.asne.org/print.cfm?printer_page%2Findex%2Ecfm%3Faction%3D404%2601> (12 January 2003).
49. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.
50. Brian L. Massey and Mark R. Levy, "Interactivity, Online Journalism and English-language Web Newspapers in Asia," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 76 (spring 1999): 138-51.
51. Arant and Meyer [Mark D. Arant and Philip Meyer, "Changing Values in the Newsroom: A Survey of Daily Newspaper Staff Members," *Nieman Reports* 51 (fall 1997): 55-62] argue that conducting a purely random sample of newspapers over-represents the readers of smaller newspapers and excludes many who read larger newspapers. In order to best represent readers with the sampling design, this study, employing Arant and Meyer's methods, took the 2 September 2002 weekday circulation figures from the *Audit Bureau of Circulation* of the 1,191 dailies listed in *Newslink* and hypothetically "stacked" all the issues on top of each other for a total weekday circulation of 52,870,276. A random starting point was chosen, and then after consulting studies to determine the print newspaper and online newspaper journalist population [see American Society of Newspaper Editors, *Newsroom Employment Drops Sharply; Diversity Increases*, 8 April 2002, <<http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?id=3432>> (1 July 2003); see Arant and Anderson, "Newspaper Online Editors," and McAdams, "Report on Editorial-Advertising Roles."] a newspaper from the "stack" was pulled at every 25,790th copy for the print journalist sample and every 30,211th newspaper to yield the online journalist sample.
52. Jane B. Singer, "Campaign Contributions: Online Newspaper Coverage of Election 2000," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 80 (spring 2003): 39-56.
53. Jane B. Singer, "Click to Contact: Online Newspaper Accountability," *Media Ethics* 12 (spring 2001): 21-23; Singer, "Campaign Contributions."
54. In all cases where this was necessary, the contact information for

the reporter was provided. Arant and Meyer (Arant and Meyer, "Changing Values in the Newsroom,") utilized this method in selecting a portion of newspaper journalists sampled in their study. In the hopes of obtaining responses from online staff members of these papers, a generic e-mail was sent to the organization asking for the message to be forwarded to the newspaper's online staff. This procedure did not result in an oversampling of reporters. A 2002 census of daily newspaper workers (ASNE, *Newsroom Employment Drops Sharply; Diversity Increases*) found 42.4% of respondents were reporters, compared to 43.6% for this study.

55. Don A. Dillman, *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, 2d ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1999)

56. When drawing the online sample, it became very apparent that there was significant variation in the number of online staff members at newspapers. Further compounding this problem is that earlier research made no distinction between online staffers whose jobs were journalistic in nature and those in other types of positions. As a result, some newspapers, because they had small online journalistic staffs in relation to print circulation, were unable to fulfill the number of survey recipients accorded them in the sampling design of the study. In addition, there were some cases where a number of newspapers shared a single Web site manned by a small staff. Examples of this include suburban newspapers in the Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco metropolitan areas. As a result the number in the online sample was only 1,280.

57. ASNE, *Newsroom Employment Drops Sharply; Diversity Increases*.

58. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*; and Paul Voakes, "The Newspaper Journalists of the '90s," *American Society of Newspaper Editors*, 31 October 1997, <<http://www.asne.org/kiosk/reports/97reports/journalists90s/coverpage.html>> (12 January 2003)

59. William P. Cassidy, "May the Force be With You: The Influence of Gatekeeping Forces on the Professional Role Conceptions of Print and Online Newspaper Journalists" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 2003).

60. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 263.

61. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.

62. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.

63. To aid interpretation of Table 2, means and standard deviations were divided by the number of items in each index, so all are based on a 7-point scale.

64. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.

65. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.

66. Pablo J. Boczkowski, *Digitizing the News: Innovation in Online Newspapers* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005), 184.

67. David Shaw, "New Media Playing Field Opens Way to More Errors," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 August 1998, sec. B, p. 4; Lasica, "A Scorecard for Net News Ethics."

68. Howard J. Finberg, Martha L. Stone, and Diane Lynch, "Digital Journalism Credibility Study," *Online News Association*, 31 January 2002, <<http://www.onlinenewsassociation.org/Programs/credibility.study.pdf>> (11 January 2003); Thomas E. Ruggiero, "Perceptions of Traditional

American Journalists Towards the Internet as a News Source" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the AEJMC, Baltimore, MD, August 1998).

69. Finberg, Stone, and Lynch, "Digital Journalism Credibility Study"; Johnson and Kaye, "Cruising is Believing?"

70. Lasica, "A Scorecard for Net News Ethics."

71. Julia Keller, "How to Keep the Watchdogs Watching," *Nieman Reports* 52 (summer 1998): 52-53; Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel, "Are Watchdogs an Endangered Species?" *Columbia Journalism Review* 40 (January/February 2001): 50-51.

72. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*.

73. Weaver and Wilhoit, *The American Journalist in the 1990s*, 140.

74. Kim Bartel Sheehan, "E-mail Survey Response Rates: A Review," *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication* 6 (January 2001), <<http://www.acusc.org/jcmc/vol6/issue2/sheehan.html>> (10 November 2002).

75. Arant and Anderson, "Newspaper Online Editors"; Singer, Tharp, and Haruta, "Online Staffers."

76. Arant and Meyer, "Changing Values in the Newsroom."

77. Boczkowski, *Digitizing the News*.