Uses and Gratifications of Digital Media: The Case of Live Blogs

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Rada and Zika Pantic, who instilled the love of learning and reading in me. They devoted their lives to education, working tirelessly to help young people understand mathematics and develop language skills. Because of their exceptional pedagogical methods and deeply ingrained sense of justice, I grew up understanding the value of hard work, fairness, tolerance, and education. My parents raised me to be independent and persistently seek knowledge. They taught me to rise above difficult circumstances in life, keep changing and moving toward a better self. On top of everything, they encouraged me to be who I am today and find happiness in the pursuit of an unconventional lifestyle.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation employs a uses and gratification approach to investigate users' motivations for reading live blogs, their attitudes toward this journalistic format, and participation in live blogging. A survey instrument was utilized in the study to obtain responses from 339 volunteer participants about the ways they use live blogs in the changing media ecosystem. Building upon the argument that new media can gratify a broader set of users' needs compared with legacy media, the study combined traditional with contemporary gratifications of media to determine what gratifications users seek in live blogs. The study results showed that immediacy, which is a gratification native to the digital media ecology, plays a critical role in live-blog consumption, as it emerged as the key predictor and main motivating factor for reading live blogs. This finding suggests that digital media users expect of news organizations that operate online to continuously update them with the latest information about events. Additionally, it calls scholars to rethink traditional approaches in assessing media consumption, and employ new variables to explain how people use media in the digital environment.

Another important finding of the study is that social utility, passing the time, entertainment, and transparent presentation of information drive millennials to read live blogs, while the same motivating factors were not identified as important among non-millennials. Furthermore, the study found that readers nurture positive attitudes toward live blogs. According to the results, readers enjoy live blogs because they deliver information about events in real time and provide a multitude of opinions and multimedia items.

With respect to participation, the dissertation findings are in line with previous studies about participation in debates and storytelling online, which showed that the capacity of online platforms to accommodate participation did not necessarily imply that citizens would be willing to participate. Even though the respondents expressed positive attitudes toward the participatory nature of live blogs, majority of them were not personally interested in participating in live blogging.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction 1
Background of the Study 1
Statement of the Problem 3
Purpose of the Study 4
Significance of the Study 6
Research Design 7
Dissertation Outline 8
Chapter Two: Literature Review 10
Uses and Gratifications Approach 10
Content and Process Gratifications 12
New Media, New Gratifications 18
New Practices in the Digital Age 20
Main Journalism Concepts 21
Truth, Interactivity, and Participation 22
Credibility and Transparency 25
Immediacy, Accuracy, and Verification of Information 28
Live Blogs 33
Research Questions 39
Chapter Three: Materials and Methods 43
Survey Development 43
Stage One 44
Stage Two 47
Sample and Procedure 50
Measures 53
Attitudes 54
Motivations 55
Participation and Social Media Habits 59
Online News Consumption Habits 59
Socio-demographic Variables 60
Data Cleaning 61
Chapter Four: Results 63
RQ1: Readers' Attitudes Toward Live Blogs 64
RQ2: What Are the Key Motivators of Live-Blog Consumption? 65
Obtaining Breaking News as a Motivation for Using Live Blogs 66
RQ2a: Differences in Motivations between Millennials and Non-Millennials 68
RQ3: Key Predictors of Likelihood to Read Live Blogs 69
RQ4: Differences in Likelihood to Read Live Blogs 70
RQ5: Differences in Motivation for Participating in Live Blogging Based on Types of Live Blogs 72
RQ6: Readers Participation in Live Blogging 72
Relationship between Participation and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs 74

RQ7: Relationship between Frequency of Reading Online News and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs 76
RQ8: Frequency of Reading Online News and Likelihood to Read Live Blogs 77
RQ9: Relationship between Attitudes Toward Live Blogs and Motivation to Participate in Live Blogging 77
Chapter Five: Discussion 79
Changing News Media Landscape 81
Multitude of Opinions and Multimedia Elements 82
Immediacy and Transparency 86
Online News Consumer Culture 90
Characteristics and Habits of Live-Blog Users 91
Gratifications of Live Blogs 93
Old Gratifications in New Media Environment 94
Millennials Praise Social Utility, Non-millennials Embrace Immediacy 96
Breaking News 98
Participation in Live Blogging 99
Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations 105
Limitations 106
Directions for Future Research 107
List of References 113
Appendices 124
Appendix A 125
Recruitment Statement 125
Appendix B 127
Informed Consent 127
Appendix C 128
Questionnaire and Directions 128
Appendix D 138
Variables and Research Questions 138
Appendix E 145
An Example of a Live Blog Published on the Guardian Website 145
Vita 146

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Survey Development 48
Table 2: Demographics 52
Table 3: Items Assessing Motivations for Using Live Blogs 57
Table 4: Attitudes toward Live Blogs 65
Table 5: Motivations for Using Live Blogs 66
Table 6: Other Motivations for Using Live Blogs 67
Table 7: Mean Scores for Motivations for Using Live Blogs for Millennials and Non-Millennials 69
Table 8: One-Way Analysis of Variance of Likelihood to Read Live Blogs Based on Device Respondents Use to Access Live Blogs 71
Table 9: Participation in Live Blogging – Frequency of Posting Comments on Live Blogs 73
Table 10: Participation in Live Blogging – Frequency of Responding to Comments on Live Blogs 74
Table 11: Bivariate Correlations between Participation in Live Blogs and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs 76
Table 12: Bivariate Correlations between Frequency of Reading Online News and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs 76
Table 13: Bivariate Correlations between Frequency of Reading Online News and Likelihood to Read Live Blogs 77
Table 14: Bivariate Correlations between Attitudes toward Live Blogs and Motivations to Participate in Live Blogging 78
Table 15: Variables 138
Table 16: Research Questions and Measurements 141

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Well-established journalism practices in collecting, editing, and delivering information to the wider public have experienced dramatic alterations in the digital age. As a major communication medium of the 21st century, the Internet has opened a whole new realm of reality, providing a powerful space which enabled using multiple layers for storytelling, hyper-production of information, and interactivity. This platform empowered audiences to select what to consume from an extensive choice set. It laid the first stone to a two-way communication, prompting news outlets to open the door to more democratic, participatory journalism. With engaged users and diverse digital capabilities, the Internet has changed professional practices that have been prevalent amongst its media predecessors such as print, television, and radio.

In the digital era, a vast array of questions about journalism tenets, new media needs and uses, changing audiences, and introduction of new players in the news environment has been raised. Two approaches in explaining the changing media landscape can be identified in the academic work in this area. One approach focuses on exploring new artifacts from existing perspectives, while the other, more flexible approach, stresses the need to reexamine traditional journalism concepts and introduce new ones (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009). Adopting the latter paradigm seems to be fruitful as it may help scholars and industry professionals better understand contemporary trends in the media industry that came along with technological development. Among these new trends are interactivity, immediacy, changing relationships

between story producers and consumers, increasing impact of social media and other communication platforms on journalism, more transparent storytelling, and utilization of user-generated content in news stories (Deuze, 2005; Hermida, 2012; Hermida & Thurman, 2008; Karlsson, 2011). Researchers have recognized the potential of a new paradigm in journalism, so they have started moving from traditional standards that have defined good journalism in order to better explain contemporary artifacts in the media industry (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009).

What is distinctive in the new media environment is that citizens take a proactive role, shaping the future of mass communication. The digital culture makes hierarchical relationships between journalists and news consumers vanish, because journalists work in the networked media setting where they collaborate with audiences in producing and disseminating news (Deuze, 2005). People use media in new ways. Nowadays, they have the opportunity to contribute to storytelling by providing their own accounts of events and opinions about social, political, and other issues. As the Internet has enabled two-way communication, journalists are pushed to be more flexible and share their jurisdiction over the truth and accuracy of information with audiences (Hermida, 2012). Aside from giving away parts of their autonomy, journalists of the digital age also need to work hard to earn trust from their readers, which is unlikely to be the case with legacy media journalists who use channels of communication to present a story and expect audiences to automatically trust them (Hayes, Singer, & Ceppos, 2007). Traditional media journalists seek trust through the credibility of news organization they work for; furthermore, their performance is not being constantly observed. As they work in the "offline world," consumers cannot see how they gather and produce information. On the other hand, digital-first journalists build trust with readers through interactivity and transparency – the practices which were enabled when media

organizations started employing new technologies to deliver the news (Hayes et al., 2007; Karlsson, 2011).

Due to these dramatic shifts on the global media scene, the ways people use media have changed. Traditionally, people have used media to seek information, gain knowledge, entertain themselves, pass the time, and have something to talk about with others (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; Katz, Gurevitch, & Haas, 1973; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000; Shao, 2009). These needs are based on social and psychological factors of individual audience members. In the 21st century, the list of people's motivations for using media has expanded. Therefore, the roots of gratifications humans seek from the media should not only be traced in their basic needs, because media needs can emerge during the interaction of an individual with a medium (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). An example of such need is participation in the news process, which can be accomplished either through contributions to the news content or giving feedback to the stories.

Statement of the Problem

Overall, the introduction of the two-way communication platform affected media industry twofold: it introduced new practices in journalism and provided the opportunity for people to use media in new ways, allowing them to engage in news production and dissemination. How these two elements fused together into one can be illustrated through a case of a live blog – a contemporary journalistic genre which modified journalism practices by delivering information on the events in real-time and encouraging users to engage in the storytelling process. The live blog presents a complex, rolling coverage of an unfolding event, recognizable by the reverse-chronological order of information, time stamps, and large amount of multimedia elements it

utilizes (O'Mahony, 2014; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Native to the online news media, the live blog is underpinned by a strong participatory component, making readers an important link in the news production chain. Readers engage in a story creation and dissemination of information, providing content that is newsworthy (Hermida & Thurman, 2008). In the age of fast-growing technologies, contributions of consumers to news websites may result in more diverse reports about social, political, and other occurrences.

Although popular among online news readers, the live blog is still an under-researched phenomenon. Shedding light on this journalistic format might help us better understand what motivates users to read live blogs and what roles they take in the new media ecosystem. Participation in live blogging especially requires academic scrutiny, as accommodating diverse opinions in a journalistic story could contribute to more open and democratic journalism. Furthermore, investigating participation is important not only for scholarly research in the journalism and mass communication field. It is also critical for news organizations that can benefit from reader participation, because such rituals can increase traffic to their websites (Peters & Witschge, 2015; Thurman, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to increase knowledge about the contemporary news media environment by focusing on live blogs. Acknowledging the active role that users play in the digital era of journalism, this dissertation directs attention to the live blogging process from the perspective of audiences. An audience member can be defined as a person to whom media messages are being directed (Kunelius, 2006).

Previous research has demonstrated that the live blog is more engaging than other journalistic formats on the Internet (Thurman & Walters, 2013). This study expands on these ideas by focusing on readers and the reasons they engage in live blogging. Accordingly, the study employed an audience-oriented uses and gratification approach to explore readers' attitudes toward live blogs, characteristics of live blogs they value most, motivations for consuming this news format, and participation in live blogging. Uses and gratification is an audience-oriented framework which explains why and how people use media to satisfy their needs (Katz et al., 1973a; Katz et al., 1973b; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Employing this perspective allowed the dissertation author to examine traditional motivations for using media, such as information seeking, knowledge, entertainment, "killing time," and social utility. However, the study went further to investigate what new concepts could emerge from live-blog consumption. Accordingly, it introduced potential gratifications that audience may seek in media/live blog use, including obtaining information that is presented in a transparent way, immediate consumption of news, and convenient access to information. These are some of the gratifications detected as motives for using media in the 21st century (Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

Furthermore, as a particular interest of the researcher was to examine to what extent features native to the digital media formats (e.g., participation, transparency) influence users to consume them, the study touched upon participation in the live-blogging process. Thus, the approach that the author of the study took aligns with Mitchelstein and Boczkowski's (2009) observation that research in academic circles is moving toward examining new artifacts in journalism and introducing new ones. The study sheds light on how contemporary concepts such as immediacy and interactivity brought to light live blogging – a practice of delivering information

in real time about an event in motion, and how these new journalistic norms affect users' decision to consume live blogs.

Significance of the Study

The research conducted so far demonstrates that the live blogging is a success story (O'Mahony, 2014; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Readers consume live blogs because they like to obtain their information in real time and read a story that is balanced (Pantic, 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Findings from the initial studies on live blogs are valuable, as they provide a detailed description about live blogs' characteristics and how they are being created. This study goes further to explain how this format illuminates changes in the news production process of the 21st century, what is the readers' likelihood to participate in live blogging and what are the key motivating factors that affect the user's decision to engage in live blogs. Hence, it contributes to increasing knowledge about what drives readers to pick consuming live blogs from a vast array of media formats available online.

Understanding why readers engage and participate in live blogging is important as it may help explain the needs of news consumers in the Information Age. Therefore, the study does not only contribute to the growing research on active audiences in the digital era, but is also valuable for the media industry, which follows closely the behavior of consumers on the Internet in order to increase traffic to their news websites. This is important because research on digital journalism should not only incorporate exploring the performance of journalists in online news media, but also the new role that audiences play in the new media environment (Nah & Chang, 2012).

Research Design

This study utilized a self-administered survey to examine users' attitudes toward live blogs, their participation in live blogging, and motivations to engage in live blogging. The participants were recruited in two ways: from a public university in the United States and through an electronic mailing list. The major weakness of this type of samples is that they produce findings that are not generalizable. However, the advantage of employing these populations is that they use Internet technologies that are necessary for consuming live blogs.

The instrument was composed of 19 blocks of questions to assess major variables: users' attitudes toward live blogs, motivations for using live blogs, online news consumption habits, participation in live blogs, and socio-demographics. Attitudes present positions, favorable or unfavorable, about people, situations, or things and they are composed of three components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral (Altmann, 2008). Hence, they can explain why the people behave in certain ways. Motives are reasons people engage in certain actions to fulfil their needs (Papacharissi, 2009). In the literature that employs uses and gratifications, the term "gratification sought" is frequently used as a synonym for motives. Participation in live blogging is reflected in activities individuals take to produce content or provide feedback to an event presented in the live blog. It is a component of engagement that does not focus on readers' passive consumption of news material, such as how much time they spend reading live blogs. Rather, participation presents a dynamic form of reader engagement which allows news consumers to take the role of content producers.

Attitudes and motivations were measured with Likert-type scales. To create items for the scale that measured attitudes, the researcher explored the literature, conducted interviews with

relevant stakeholders, and analyzed live blogs on major news websites. A part of the scale measuring motivations for using live blogs utilized old scales that measure gratification sought from consuming traditional media (e.g., information seeking, entertainment). However, several items which were detected in the literature on uses and gratifications of new media were employed to assess new motivations for using media (e.g., participation, immediacy). Cronbach's alpha was utilized to estimate the reliability of the measurements. Validity was assessed through face validity, experts' thoughts on the issue, and scholarly literature that deals with the topic under study.

Participation was assessed by questions that asked the respondents how often they post comments and respond to other people's comments on live blogs. To examine online news consumption habits, the author asked several questions related to frequency of reading news online, frequency of reading live blogs, and the types of live blogs they read most often. Socio-demographic variables included sex, age, race, and education.

Dissertation Outline

The dissertation begins with an overview of the uses and gratification approach which served as a framework for understanding media uses in the 21st century. It continues with a broad literature review which explains journalism practices in the new media environment and how they are related to changing media consumption habits among audiences. In the literature review, the author also elaborates on major findings of the studies that explored the live blogging phenomenon. The next chapter provides the detailed description about methodology which was utilized in the dissertation. This chapter is followed by the results and discussion chapters. Finally, the

dissertation ends with a conclusion, which addresses major findings of the study, the study's limitations, and provides guidance for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Uses and Gratifications Approach

Uses and gratifications is a functionalist perspective of communication which aims at investigating the underlying reasons of media consumption habits. Focused on audiences, this approach traces its roots back to the early 1940s, when thriving media at that time, such as movies and radio, became an essential part of the daily lives of millions of Americans (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Initial studies that introduced uses and gratifications perspective targeted radio consumers, determining the reasons they listen to the daytime radio serials or radio soap operas in the United States. At that time, uses and gratifications was considered to be a revolutionary approach, as it called into question a theoretical model that perceived audiences as passive recipients of information who automatically adopt media messages and behave according to them. While the powerful effect model of media influence emphasized the power of media over people, the uses and gratifications perspective assumed that audiences actively seek content according to their personal preferences. The approach posits that media selection can help understand "the relationship between the attributes of the media (real or perceived) and the social and psychological functions which they serve" (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 20).

The aim of uses and gratifications perspective is not to explain what media do to people, but what people do with media. Therefore, U&G does not deal with media effects; it investigates the functions that media serve in consumers' lives. The historical roots of the concept could be found in Lasswell's (1948) article about the structure and function of communication. Lasswell

identified three such functions: 1) the surveillance of the environment; 2) the correlation of the parts of society; and 3) social transmission or passing on the heritage from one generation to another. Functions refer to the "consequences of certain routine" and they are "distinct from the intended effects, or purposes of the communicator and from the intended use or motivations of the receiver" (Wright, 1974, p. 209). People can be motivated to watch television because they want to relax or pass the time, but if they are continually exposed to a specific program, it can have an impact on their attitudes and perceptions of the issue presented in the program (Wright, 1974). Hence, the function of watching the TV program in that case is entertainment, while the effect is the change in people's attitudes. Functions serve "to match one's wits against others, to acquire information or advice for daily living, to provide a framework for one's day, to prepare oneself culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or to be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role" (Katz et al. 1973a, p. 509).

As an approach aimed at exploring media uses based on people's needs and social and psychological factors (Katz et al., 1973b; Papacharissi, 2009; Ruggiero, 2000; Vincent & Basil, 1997), U&G has attracted great attention from scholars. Initial studies that were conducted in the 1940s and early 1950s addressed that certain characteristics of a medium or content were related to the functions they had in the lives of consumers. Those studies detected several content or medium functions. For instance, the functions identified in the studies that focused on radio listeners as those that affected the consumers' decision to listen to the radio soap operas included wishful thinking, seeking advice, and emotional release (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Early research identified needs and gratifications through self-reports of people who participated in the U&G studies (Katz et al., 1973b). Decades of research expanded the list of uses

and gratifications by identifying a vast array of the media-related needs and gratifications. Still, the approach suffered structural and methodological inconsistencies for a long time, as scholars struggled to develop categories of gratifications and needs to better explain audiences' consumption habits and preferences.

In an attempt to systematize needs that play the key role in audiences' decisions to consume certain media or content, Katz et al. (1973a) identified 35 needs and grouped them into five categories. Those include: 1) cognitive needs or needs for knowledge and information; 2) affective needs (aesthetic, pleasurable and emotional experience); 3) a combination of cognitive and affective needs such as the needs related to strengthening confidence and status; 4) social integrative needs which are reflected in a person's need to strengthen his or her contact with family, friends, and the world; and 5) need to escape or tension-release (p. 166-167). Using a sample of 1,500 Israeli adults, they investigated different functions that the media (i.e., newspapers, radio, television, film, and books) have in people's lives. The study found that film was the most important medium for enjoying oneself, while newspapers served the function of strengthening self-confidence and self-esteem, and television was used to pass the time. Television was also the medium that people were most likely to turn to when they wanted to connect with their families.

Content and Process Gratifications

Gratifications can be defined as pleasure that an individual feels when his or her needs are satisfied. One can distinguish two categories of gratifications: content and process. Content gratifications are gratifications that come from the messages produced by the media, while the concept of process gratification explains media use as it suggests that gratifications come from the experience of using media (Cutler & Danowski, 1980). A person might consume certain content

to obtain information or acquire knowledge. Hence, this type of gratification is called "content gratification." Process gratification, on the other hand, comes from consuming the medium itself. Accordingly, audiences can fulfill the need to relax or escape from problems or their daily activities by simply watching television (Cutler & Danowski, 1980; Katz et al., 1973b).

Even though the distinction between these two concepts appears to be clear, scholars identified certain overlaps in terms of factors that drive users to seek either content or process gratifications. Bantz (1982), who examined the relationship between medium and content, learned that there were no strict differences in factors that affected uses of a medium and a TV program. With this finding, he suggested that uses and gratification studies should incorporate investigation of the interaction between the medium and the content, as these variables are related.

Bantz's findings also contribute to the notion of flexibility of uses and gratifications, which some researchers consider as the major flaw of the perspective. Ruggiero (2000) stressed that there are not strictly defined categories of motives for media uses and that researchers operationalize in different ways major U&G concepts such as uses, gratifications, and motives. Earlier, Palmgreen, Wenner, and Rayburn (1981) addressed that the approach had methodological and theoretical weaknesses. Their major concern was to draw a line between gratification sought and gratification obtained from media and content consumption. In an attempt to make this distinction, they defined the concept of gratification sought as "expectancy of a certain outcome (being entertained) as a function of certain behavior (watching TV news)" while gratification obtained referred to the perception that certain behavior (e.g., watching TV), results in certain outcome, such as being entertained (p. 473). Hence, gratifications sought are based on expectations that an individual has from media consumption. As such, they will have an impact on what the individual perceives that

are gratifications obtained from the consumption (Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980). Thus, these concepts are not the same, but they are moderately and strongly related and influence one another (Palmgreen et al., 1980; 1981). For instance, those who engage in a certain TV program are likely to seek their gratifications based on the gratifications they received from watching the program (Palmgreen et al., 1980).

Gratifications sought are used interchangeably with the term "motives" for media use. Motives can be defined as "general dispositions that influence people's actions taken for the fulfillment of a need or want and behavior" (Papacharissi, 2009, p. 139). The difference between motives/gratification sought and gratification obtained is best reflected in the questions that researchers pose in the survey instruments they employ to obtain responses about consumers' uses of the media. An example of a statement that illustrates gratifications sought would be: "I read Web-based magazines to relax," while a statement "Web-magazines help me relax" indicates what gratifications respondents obtain from consuming web-magazines (December, 1996, p. 30).

Gratifications that have traditionally been employed in the literature include: information seeking/surveillance; knowledge; entertainment; pass time; escape; and utility (Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Shao, 2009; Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004). They respond to the typology of needs earlier identified by Katz et al. (1973a). Information seeking and surveillance refer to people's inclination to feel secure, satisfy curiosity, and learn about themselves, their communities, and the world around them (Katz et al., 1973b; Palmgreen et al., 1980; Ruggiero, 2000; Shao, 2009). Knowledge and information seeking belong to the category of cognitive needs, developed by Katz et al. (1973a). These variables have been used frequently in media research to explain people's news consumption habits and predict their future media use. For instance, surveillance was

identified as a predictor of news media use among college students (Vincent & Basil, 1997). Furthermore, consuming media with an aim of news surveillance and information seeking was identified as a process that can have an impact on social capital, as it can increase it (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012).

Entertainment as a variable has predominantly been employed in the studies that investigated the uses of radio and television (Stafford et al., 2004). Several studies found that television is frequently used by those who seek entertainment (Vincent & Basil, 1997), while information seeking is common among people who use the Internet (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Shao, 2009; Stafford et al., 2004). Escape can be the result of "the need to release tension and reduce anxiety" (Katz et al., 1973b, p. 514). Using media to relax or kill time is the result of needs for escape, while entertainment is related to affective needs (Katz et al., 1973a). Diddi and LaRose (2006) found that entertainment and escapism were positively related with consumption of Internet news, while surveillance was positively related to the news consumption via the Internet, as well as newspapers, cable TV, and broadcast. Utility has frequently been operationalized as obtaining information for communication with other people (Ruggerio, 2000). It refers to an individual's need to connect to the society and gain better understanding of social location in the society "through interaction about media characters and events in conversations with friends and family" (Palmgreen et al., 1980). Utility relates to two out of the three functions identified by Lasswell (1948): the correlation of the parts of the society in responding to the environment and the transmission of social heritage.

Researchers also studied the social and physical context of media consumption (Katz et al., 1973). The assumption was that different personal and social characteristics could produce

different needs. Accordingly, scholars have investigated media preferences by sex, race, educational level, income, and age. Gerson (1966), for instance, studied uses of media as an agency of socialization in pre-marital cross-behavior. He found differences in media behavior between African-American and white adolescents. Specifically, he learned that the former were more likely to consult media for getting guidance in their cross-sex behavior than the latter. Specifically, more African Americans than white adolescents would get ideas about dating from TV, newspapers, movies, magazines, and books.

Cutler and Danowski (1980) explored media use motivations across age groups. They found that there were changes in gratifications as people age because they were likely to gravitate more toward process than content gratifications. Another study showed that there was a positive relationship between education and needs. Specifically, the level of education was positively related to the number of needs that people rate as "very important" in terms of their media use (Katz et al., 1973a). Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found that students who were social and happy with their life were likely to use the Internet when they seek information, while those who did not feel confident in having face-to-face conversations with other people used the Internet to fill time.

A group of scholars who aimed at explaining why and how people integrate media into their daily life focused on media uses across age-cohort groups (baby boomers, Generation X and millennials). For instance, one study found that millennials, or the so-called Generation Y age group that represents young adults born after 1982 (Drumheller, 2005), use interactive media for utility, acquiring information and entertainment (Moore, 2012). As the findings suggest, the difference between Generation Y and other cohort groups is that millennials incorporate technologies in their daily life to a greater extent than Generation X and boomers. Furthermore,

the study found that in terms of social media use, millennials tend to access these platforms on their phones, while non-millennials were more likely to access social media on non-mobile devices (Moore, 2012). Another study found that non-millennials were more avid Facebook users than millennials (Valentine, 2013). Based on the study results, non-millennials reported that they spent on average almost five hours on Facebook every day. That was twice as much time that young adults spend on Facebook (Valentine, 2013). While Valentine compared age cohort groups, Pearson, Carmon, Tobola, and Fowler (2009/2010) focused solely on millennials, as they were interested in exploring motivations for electronic device use among the members of this cohort. They found that millennials use computers, cell phones, MP3 players and television to pass the time, for companionship, to entertain themselves, and for social interaction.

Among the variables that have been employed in scholarly literature on uses and gratifications were also people's attitudes, as they have proven to be good predictors of the ways audiences use media to fulfill their needs. For instance, a study about the uses and gratifications of political websites showed that attitudes toward politics were correlated with using political sites for guidance, information seeking/surveillance, entertainment, and social utility (Kaye & Johnson, 2002). However, the motivation for using political sites for guidance and information seeking was stronger than using these sites for entertainment, according to the study. December (1996) suggested that the typology of human needs can be used to investigate people's attitudes toward media consumption. The typology of human needs includes information seeking/surveillance, entertainment, interpersonal utility, and parasocial interaction, which is defined as "interaction with the characters in the program as if they were real people" (Palmgreen et al., 1980, p. 165).

New Media, New Gratifications

A long list of variables has been employed in research to study the characteristics of the media and the characteristics of the people who use them, as well as to study social factors, psychological factors, and social context (December, 1996). The list further expanded at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, when audiences started replacing traditional media with the Internet to get their dose of news (Dimmick, Chen, & Li, 2004). Along with this trend, scholars started exploring new needs and gratifications that have emerged in the digital age. Their understanding was that old and new media might fulfill similar, but not identical needs of audiences (Kaye & Johnson, 2002). Traditional media encompass newspapers, television, radio, and film, while the concept of the new media includes the Internet, social networking sites, and smartphone apps (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). The Internet with its interactive feature can meet a broader set of needs than traditional media (Dimmick et al., 2004; Kaye & Johnson, 2002).

New technologies have given a boost to the U&G approach, as they have contributed to the multiplication of motives for using media and provided new gratification opportunities in media choice (Ruggiero, 2000). Sundar and Limperos (2013) criticized the practice of strictly employing measures designed for assessing gratifications of old media to detect gratifications sought and obtained from the new media. Stafford et al. (2004) suggested adding social gratification for the Internet use to already established process and content gratification. An illustration of such a gratification is using social media such as Twitter to connect with others (Chen, 2011).

Both unique medium-specific and broad categories have been identified in scholarly work that deals with the uses and gratifications of new media (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). An example of a medium-specific category can be photo sharing and liking on Facebook, while interactivity

can be perceived as a broad category identified in the literature. Several studies emphasized the importance of interaction as the gratification that emerged in the digital age (Chen, 2011; Ruggiero, 2000; Stafford et al., 2004; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Interactivity that the Internet as a new medium provides is reflected in a two-way communication process that occurs between a user and a medium. Furthermore, interactivity as one of the key features of new media drives scholars to abandon the traditional U&G approach that explains people's media use habits through their basic human needs. Instead, Sundar and Limperos (2013) argue that needs could be based on specific media features, meaning that they could develop during a user's interaction with the medium. Hence, the interactivity can produce needs.

Aside from interactivity, other distinct attributes of new media are demassification, and asynchroneity. Demassification refers to the user's ability to pick what he or she wants to consume, while asynchroneity means that new technologies allow people to consume content at any time (Ruggiero, 2000). The list of new gratifications does not end there. Shao (2009), for instance, identified consumption, production, and participation as the uses of user-generated media. Furthermore, he stressed that these uses produce different gratifications. Information seeking and entertainment could be identified as motivations for consuming news, while participation might be related to social interaction and community development, and production can result in gratifications such as self-actualization and self-expression (p. 9). Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2012) found that using social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter for political news and information about public issues was positively related with social capital, which encompasses resources in the society needed for pursuing shared goals. Furthermore, information seeking on social media was

positively related to political participation both on the Internet and offline. Citizens who used social media to acquire information were likely to engage in political and civic activities.

New Practices in the Digital Age

New technologies started introducing major transformations in the media industry at the beginning of the 21st century. Affected by the growing number of Internet users, this great time of rapid changes pushed news organizations worldwide to allow more flexible journalism in which audiences get to engage in providing accounts of events and feedback to the stories. Due to the immense changes of the global media landscape, scholars were prompted to consider taking a fresh approach in studying journalism and audiences. According to Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2009), who analyzed scholarly literature about online news production from 2000 to 2009, researchers have grouped around two basic paradigms in assessing the digital media phenomena. One approach focuses on exploring new artifacts from existing perspectives, while the other addresses the need to examine these new phenomena to rethink old journalism concepts and introduce new ones. As an illustration, one can examine the role of users in the news production process to rethink traditional practices of information verification and introduce new concepts, such as participatory journalism.

While analyzing the literature on online news production, Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2009) noticed that scholars started moving from the traditional to the new approach, applying new lenses to explain contemporary artifacts in journalism. Adopting the new position would be fruitful as it may help better understand new trends in the media industry which came along with technological development. Such a perspective is optimistic toward new media and their audiences

as it poses that journalism is becoming more democratic, shifting toward collaborative verification, opening the door to diverse viewpoints, and placing high value on transparent reporting, where users are able to see details about the news production process which were not available to them in the pre-digital era (Deuze, 2005; Hermida, 2012; Karlsson, 2011).

Main Journalism Concepts

Journalism as a profession is grounded in delivering the truth, information verification, the actuality of facts, credibility, fairness, independence, providing objective knowledge, loyalty to citizens, and monitoring those in power (Deuze, 2005; Hanitzsch, 2007; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Kunelius, 2006). Traditionally, journalists have been perceived as professionals who are expected to inform the public about societal developments and be a "representative watchdog of the status quo in the name of people, who 'vote with their wallets' for their services" (Deuze, 2005, p. 447). Digital media culture calls for a redefinition of this role, because news organizations are no longer exclusive sources of information, transmitters of news, or watchdogs. The Internet and its Web 2.0 platform provided everyone who has access to them with the opportunity to produce and disseminate information, thus affecting journalism and pushing scholars to rethink the traditional concepts of the profession.

Journalists are adjusting to changes in the media environment, while simultaneously trying to maintain their traditional role of storytellers and preserve professional norms (Deuze, 2005). The importance of the journalistic principles that present the backbone of the profession is indisputable. Deep-rooted journalism values serve a democratic purpose in society, as supplying the public with accurate and trustworthy information should allow citizens to judge events and make decisions freely (Hermida, 2015). However, rapid technological development affected the

ways that crucial values, such as accuracy, verification of information, delivering the truth, and credibility are being implemented in the news environment. Journalists are shifting toward a more collectivistic approach in the collection, production, and dissemination of news as they are competing with amateurs to attract more attention to the stories they create, and keep being a key player in informing the public (Deuze 2004; Hermida, 2012; Karlsson, 2011). Even though media organizations still present the main player in providing information to the wider public, other non-professional actors also participate in news production and agenda setting (Domingo, Quandt, Heinonen, Paulussen, Singer, & Vujnovic, 2008). The following sections explain in more depth how rapid technological development contributed to changes in implementing journalism values and what new tenets it introduced.

Truth, Interactivity, and Participation

The truth is the first principle of journalism. This concept should not be regarded in philosophical ways, which stress that the truth is debatable as everyone can have their own versions and perceptions of it. Delivering the truth in journalism means that "reality has to be described as accurately and precisely as possible" (Hanitzsch, 2007, p. 376). Therefore, the truth should be conceptualized as gathering the facts, putting them together and making sense of them (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007).

Media consumption in the pre-digital era was created in a one-way communication environment. This type of communication, which was employed by the traditional media, such as print, television, radio, and film, meant the authority over the truth was in the hands of the media, which used channels of communication to present a story and expected of audiences to trust them (Hayes et al., 2007). With the introduction of the Internet, which enabled the two-way

communication and allowed audiences to engage in news production, the authority of journalists over the truth seems to vanish; as more people engage in determining what the truth is, personal judgment of a journalist is being replaced by the collective jurisdiction over the truth (Hermida, 2012). Thus, delivering the truth needs to be assessed from a new perspective. In the digital media culture, truth-telling should be examined within a wider context of interactivity, which enables users to be active suppliers of information on social media, news websites, and other Internet platforms. The digital era introduced a whole new realm of reality in which audiences have outgrown the role of (passive) recipients of information, and now engage in determining what the truth is by providing their personal accounts of newsworthy events. This interactive nature of the new media allows utilization of a diverse set of opinions in stories (Karlsson, 2011) and it changes relationships between the audiences and journalists, making them less hierarchical (Deuze, 2005). These relationships have changed because journalists no longer hold an exclusive authority to deliver the truth to the wider public. As we delve deeper into the age of smartphones and tablets, it appears that everyone can take pictures, videos, filter them and post them on social media or Internet blogs to reach millions. It is not unusual for the information to break on social media such as Twitter first, and be published by a non-journalist who has been involved in an event (Hermida, 2015).

News outlets have acknowledged that media uses and needs have changed, as audiences started taking the role of news stories producers, making content on the Internet more diverse than ever. To what extent users are engaged with media formats is reflected in practices of news organizations that allow readers to participate in content creation at several levels, including direct contributions, poll responses, blogging, and providing comments to the stories (Hermida &

Thurman, 2008). Even if the news media try to limit this interaction by setting boundaries on readers' content or not allowing any comments to be posted on news stories, users can still express their viewpoints and share their stories on other Internet platforms, such as social media. They can also post reports on citizen journalism websites, which share some characteristics of news websites, as they employ practices common to journalism, such as gatekeeping (Linder, 2016).

People have been participating in digital storytelling for more than a decade. For instance, in December 2004, ordinary citizens, mostly holiday-makers, provided comprehensive coverage of the South-Asian tsunami, as they used cameras to take photographs and videos of the disaster and posted them online (Allan, 2009). That was the initial stage of participatory, citizen journalism, which importance has grown over the years. Nowadays, there are actors on the Internet who are non-professional journalists, but they still produce news and spread information to the extent that they can affect agenda setting in the media (Domingo et al., 2008). One such example is the Clinton-Lewinsky affair, which became a top story in 1998 in the U.S. and abroad. While exploring how the story broke, Williams and Delli Carpini (2004) found that the news did not come from the mainstream media, so they were not agenda setters in that case. Alternative sources, such as the Drudge Report website and entertainment shows like The Tonight Show were among those accountable for directing the public attention toward Clinton and Lewinsky, contributing to the revelation of the truth.

News media still present a credible player in the process of determining what the truth is, as there is still a perception in the society that journalists are those who provide the accounts of events that are trustworthy (Hayes et al., 2007). This sense of credibility is what distinguishes them from other information providers on the Internet. What is indisputable is that the process of

determining the truth, as described by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007), has changed, because the new media are under pressure to allow more actors to participate in it. Thus, the process of determining the truth should now be examined within a wider context of interactivity enabled by the Internet. Specifically, the Internet has contributed to facilitating users' participation in news production and distribution (Hermida, Fletcher, Korell, & Logan, 2012) as it initiated interaction between consumers, news producers, and other stakeholders on the Internet. Interactivity seems to add value to the well-established concept of the truth in journalism as, according to Karlsson (2011), it has contributed to more transparent journalism, giving audiences a chance to see how media workers gather information and what sources they employ in their stories. Users' participation can also be beneficial for media organizations as it allows them to cover events in places where they do not have reporters (Hujanen, 2016). Furthermore, engaging users in the news production process can contribute to more comprehensive coverage of events, because journalists can use various platforms to reach witnesses of events – something they had not been able to do prior to the digital era.

Credibility and Transparency

Credibility is another tenet that needs to be addressed in rethinking major issues in journalism in the digital era. In brief, credibility means that sources in the stories employed to give their accounts or opinions about certain issues or events need to have the authority and knowledge to discuss those issues (Phillips, 2015). In this changing media culture, values that influence credibility include authenticity, accountability, and autonomy (Hayes et al., 2007).

Authenticity refers to the institutional dimension of journalism. The wider public sees journalists as employees of the media companies, so they perceive their reporting as the reporting

of the news outlets for which those journalists work (Hayes et al., 2007). Accordingly, journalists who work in both traditional and the digital environment earn credibility through their news organization. Authenticity is important in the online world, as it draws a line between journalists and other information providers. Furthermore, authenticity makes a distinction between the content online that is informal, or not fully verified, and the information that is valid. Such example could be found in reports that combine content from social media and authenticated, verified sources (Hermida, 2012). Readers can distinguish between informal and formal sources when journalists transparently cite sources and provide links to information in news reports (Hayes et al., 2007; Thurman & Walters, 2013).

Accountability refers to disclosure of the facts and provision of the evidence that the information in the news story is true. In the digital environment, accountability is amplified via transparency. This relationship reflects the ways that new and evolving technologies may enhance traditional tenets of journalism. In this case, new technologies seem to increase pressure on journalists and news organizations to be more accountable. Due to Internet transparency, journalists are forced to be careful when selecting sources and verifying information (Hermida, 2015; Hermida & Thurman, 2008). In line with that is ensuring that the information they gather online comes from credible sources. Careful examination of information before making it public on the website will help journalists avoid being duped by some disinformation published on social media, for instance (Philips, 2015).

Transparency is not new to journalism; however, this principle was neglected in the era of the traditional media, while in the digital world, it has been "a prominent norm" (Singer, 2015, p. 31). Pursuing transparency in journalism translates into being open about sources used in a story

and the methods employed in the newsgathering process (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007). This tenet is not only critical for promoting good journalism, but is also recognized by audiences as a desirable way to present events. For instance, a case study of the German television newscast Tagesschau online platform showed that users' rated source transparency as the most important feature of audience participation in the news (Heise, Loosen, Reimer, & Schmidt, 2014). According to the study, the audiences expressed the desire for additional information about journalistic sources and actors who were engaged in the news creation process.

Karlsson (2011) argues that interactivity has contributed to more transparent journalism, as the audience get a chance to learn about journalists' backstage performance – how they gather information and from which sources. In case of live blogs, Singer (2015) noticed that "the transparency of the format was seen as fostering inclusivity of users in the news-making process, making the boundaries around journalistic work more porous than in even recent past" (p. 27). Transparency allows readers to be engaged in the news production process by criticizing stories and participating in their creation (Deuze, 2005). Being exercised through interactivity, transparency contributes to building trust between journalists and news consumers (Hermida, 2015).

Another dimension that influences credibility is autonomy, which means working independently from external actors, such as a government, to supply citizens with the information (Hayes et al., 2007). Autonomy is challenged in the digital age, as journalists are pushed to share it with others (Deuze, 2005), just like they share their authority over the truth with audiences (Hermida, 2012). In the networked media environment, journalists allow readers to collaborate in the process of determining the truthfulness and accuracy of information. Journalists are being

observed constantly and they "no longer control who gets to play" (Hayes et al., 2007, p. 274). Furthermore, the news production process is becoming more democratic not only because journalists share their autonomy with readers, but also because they are gaining more autonomy from their superiors. For instance, the case of Norwegian website dagbladet.no shows that journalists feel more freedom from their editors in daily news production than their counterparts who work primarily for the print edition of the Dagbladet (Steensen, 2009). Based on accounts of journalists whom Steensen interviewed for his study, they have the freedom to select content to the extent that sometimes they feel as if no one is in control or no one appear to take the role of a leader in the newsroom. Hence, they have more autonomy in relation to their management, and more autonomy in comparison to journalists who work for the print. Similarly, McEnnis (2016) interviewed sports journalists who live-blog for major news organizations in the United Kingdom to find that editorial autonomy is an essential part of live blogging. Perception of the journalists is that they have flexibility in live-blogging because they do not need to consult their superiors for each update they publish. However, they admit that they are frequently obliged to incorporate commercial content into their blogs. Oli Burley, sports journalist at Sky Sports explains, "we now have far more products on offer so in any blog you can find us referencing Sky Bet, Now TV, Score Centre or Sky Go" (referenced in McEnnis, 2016, p. 977).

Immediacy, Accuracy, and Verification of Information

Aside from transparency, new media practices also incorporate immediacy, which responds to the audiences' expectations to see information as an event unfolds, not a few hours after it happened (Allan, 2006). However, this new norm, that is also a new gratification of online

news media, has been criticized frequently due to its proneness to cause inaccurate information to be delivered to readers.

The concern about accuracy, which translates into reporting facts precisely and correctly (Brooks, Kennedy, Moen, & Ranly, 2002) is salient when journalists utilize content from various social media sources (Singer, 2015). Relying on social media is a common practice in contemporary journalism, even though journalists are aware of potential issues that follow utilization of these sources, including misleading and contradictory information (Thurman, Schifferes, Fletcher, Newman, Hunt, & Schapals, 2016). Social media sources are not the only information providers that could be misleading; journalists employ many other Internet sources while producing stories. For instance, Paulussen and Ugille (2008) interviewed journalists in three newsrooms in Belgium and learned that they use the Internet sources substantially for work, but that they are aware that issues of trust and reliability might emerge from these practices. They deal with this problem by trying to be cautious when utilizing material from the Internet in the stories they create.

Accuracy is crucial to journalism as when it is faulty, everything else would be in question (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007). For those who praise traditional journalism values, the obligation of media to deliver accurate information is non-disputable. In contemporary journalism, however, there is an apparent tension between tradition and innovation (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2009), because journalists find themselves at the crossroads, deciding whether it is more important to report news at a high speed or to ensure full accuracy of the story before its publication. O'Sullivan and Heinonen (2008) who interviewed more than 200 journalists in 11 European countries, learned

that 41 percent of journalists believed that speed had supremacy over accuracy online, while 35 percent disagreed that journalists traded accuracy for speed.

In the era of digital communications "challenges facing professional journalism values have been characterized as a process where a traditional journalism model of verification has been gradually replaced by a new model of assertion" which is "based on the 24/7 media culture where the most important thing is to get news out as quickly as possible" (Karlsson, Clerwall, & Nord, 2016, p. 2-3). As audiences can use various channels on the web, including social media to disseminate the information, journalists are under pressure to promptly report the story and be faster than others (Hermida, 2013). Thus, due to the speed at which they write and post stories, journalists might be under higher risk to publish false information (Karlsson et al., 2016; O'Mahony, 2014). However, some scholars who contend that critique related to accurate reporting has often been unfair, as there is not sufficient research evidence to demonstrate that digital-first journalists trade accuracy for speed (Hermida, 2012). The BBC, for instance, clearly states on its website that accuracy is more important than speed ("Editorial guidelines: Introduction," n.d., para 6).

From the perspective of audiences, getting the facts straight is critical, but journalists could be forgiven if the mistakes they make are small and transparently addressed. This conclusion is derived from the study by Karlsson et al. (2016) who explored readers' attitudes toward errors in news to learn that 60 percent of respondents were not ready to trade accuracy for quick delivery of information by the media. The issue of transparency emerged as a concept that played an important role in users' perception of news with mistakes, as majority of them, 66 percent, said that they were ready to accept small errors in the news if news producers corrected them. However,

readers were not ready to tolerate errors they did not perceive as small. Specifically, 74 percent of respondents said they were not willing to accept large errors with correction. Thus, "corrections themselves are not a cure for bad journalistic practice, as they cannot mend large errors" (Karlsson et al., 2016, p. 10).

The verification process has traditionally been applied in journalism to check the accuracy of information. Verification of information is an important principle of journalism as it distinguishes it from other forms of communication, such as informal communication on social media, where verification is not a necessity (Hermida, 2012). In the digital world, verification and accountability are some standards that set professional journalists apart from others who publish information on the web (Singer, 2015). Journalists identify themselves through the aforementioned professional values they share and which give credibility to their work (Deuze, 2005; Singer, 2015). In addition, these norms help the wider population make a distinction between those who are journalists and those who are not. As an illustration, when asked to draw a line between journalists and others, students at the University of Iowa said that journalists were those who provided the information they could trust (Hayes et. al., 2007, p. 262). Furthermore, people expect of digital media to deliver information that is credible and trustworthy even if initial producers of the content that is published on a news website are amateurs. Specifically, a study found that 37 percent of news media consumers in Canada were likely to trust user-generated content if it was edited by professional journalists (Hermida et al., 2012). Therefore, implementing journalism values in the online world seems to contribute to people's perception that the information they access on news websites is trustworthy.

According to some scholars, the verification process seems to be more flexible in online than in "offline" journalism. An example of a loose verification process online is live blogging, a practice of reporting about an event in motion in real-time in the form of brief updates (Thurman & Walters, 2013). A specific feature of live blogs is that they are being created in the office, so they heavily rely on information published on social media, news websites, and other Internet sources (O'Mahony, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Due to time constraints and pressure to report as an event is unfolding, journalists who create live blogs selectively verify information (Hermida, 2015; Thurman & Walters, 2013). This is at odds with traditional journalism, where it is expected that all the facts are checked before a news media publishes a story. Specifically, while the practice in print is to verify the facts and then publish a story, the case of live blogs, for instance, tells us that journalists publish information and verify it as the story unfolds (Phillips, 2015).

This flexible practice of information verification should be examined in the context of the changing media environment that encourages alternative methods in performing journalism and different ways of media use. Journalism is shifting toward collaborative verification of information, as journalists join forces with readers to verify facts (Hermida, 2012). Verification of information drives the study back to the notion of transparency, which is one of the norms to which digital journalism prides itself on adhering to. For instance, Karlsson (2011) argues that the fast speed at which the news is created online allows users to see how the process of information gathering and dissemination works. Transparency can further emphasize the importance of maintaining traditional standards in reporting and slightly altering them to respond to the contemporary journalism demands. Hermida (2015) even argues that due to high transparency on the Internet, the news organizations are pushed to prioritize verification of information at the

expense of speed. As their backstage performance is being disclosed on the Internet, journalists need to be careful about credibility, accuracy, verification, and delivering the truth. Hence, those who contend that journalists are abandoning verification process for speed are exaggerating (Hermida, 2015).

Overall, discussing digital era practices and media consumption should incorporate the new role that audiences play in the new media environment (Nah & Chang, 2012). As aforementioned, journalists no longer have the exclusive right to use media to reach out to the masses, as the digital era has allowed many non-professionals to publish content that can reach a wide auditorium (Domingo et al., 2008). News consumers can directly contribute to the news websites that allow readers' input (Thurman, 2008). Therefore, new forms of engagement could contribute to expanding users' needs and gratification in the digital media environment.

Live Blogs

Among the prominent digital media developments that encompass major concepts such as changing journalism practices, active users, and utilization of versatile multimedia elements to tell a story, is a live blog. This web-native journalistic genre emerged with the expansion of new technologies that enabled interactive long-form narrative storytelling in real-time. A live blog is "a single blog post on a specific topic to which time-stamped content is progressively added for a finite period—anywhere between half an hour and 24 hours" (Thurman & Walters, 2013, p. 83). Hence, its structure is significantly different from a structure of the conventional, inverted pyramid stories. Specifically, while a hard news story is written after a reporter gathers relevant facts about an event, the live blog format allows journalists to "start writing as soon as a story breaks and then to verify as the story unfolds, updating with information gleaned online, from a variety of known

and verifiable sources, as well as linking to information that cannot be immediately verified so that the audience can refine the story as it unfolds" (Phillips, 2015, p. 56). A distinctive feature of the live blog is that the news items within it are not organized based on their importance. Instead, the live blog places information in reverse chronological order, so consumers get to read the latest update of an event first (Thurman & Walters, 2013). With links to sources it incorporates and real-time storytelling, the live blog demonstrates how digital media norms, such as transparency, immediacy, and collective verification of information, lead the way to new media uses and gratifications.

Since live blogs place facts in reverse chronological order, readers can see whether some information has been added to a real-time event coverage from their last visit to the live blog page (Allan, 2006). Besides the specific order of facts, live blogs are also recognizable by the time stamps they place by each update of an event and by a large amount of multimedia elements they utilize. In particular, live blogs deliver a real-time coverage of events using not just words, but also social media posts (e.g., embedded tweets), videos, photographs, graphs, hyperlinks, and other items (Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Pantic, Whiteside and Cvetkovic (2017) analyzed 150 live blogs published by *The Guardian* to find that they cited as many as 3,946 sources, and included 1,420 photographs and 1,365 Twitter posts. Another study found that the live blogs published by the UK-based media organizations have 12 times more quotes attributed to a source than print articles, and 15 times more than online articles (Thurman & Schapals, 2017). As they employ multiple sources and transparently show where the information comes from by providing links to sources, readers in the UK, where the format was initially launched, perceive live blogs as more balanced than news articles (Thurman & Newman, 2014). Furthermore, the UK

news consumers believe that live blogs present a convenient way for getting news while they are at work (p. 661).

The live blog was introduced as a new media format in 1999, when the UK-based newspapers *The Guardian* live-blogged on its website about a soccer game between two European teams – Inter Milan and Manchester United (Ashrowan, 2014). Six years later, *The Guardian* started using this journalistic genre on a regular basis and soon impacted other media outlets to adopt live blogging practice when covering events in motion (Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). For example, the BBC nowadays publishes live blogs when covering both international and the UK-based events. The network describes the live blogs as "short updates of local news, sport, travel, weather, user comments and links to external sites and sources" ("Local Live – giving users access to BBC newsrooms," 2015, para 2). Major components of live blogging that the BBC emphasized in the description of "Local Live" correspond to the description of *The Guardian* live blogs published in the studies by O'Mahony (2014), Pantic et al. (2017), and Thurman and Walters (2013). Among those features are reader engagement, fast and accurate delivery of information, diverse content, and transparency which is reflected in incorporating links to sources employed in a story. Furthermore, the BBC promises the live blogs will deliver stories behind the news:

> We will aim to use the local websites to engage users on a variety of platforms, whether by text, email or via social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. We'll be asking people to get in touch with our writers and give their thoughts on BBC content. BBC Local Live writers will also share tweets, Facebook posts and blogs to interest and inform the audience. And finally, on BBC Local Live we'll be trying to give users a greater insight into our journalism and "the story behind the news," by inviting them to see how we develop stories ("Local Live – giving users access to BBC newsrooms," 2015, para 8-11).

The event that prompted news media to embrace the format was suicide bombings in London in July 2005. Highly respected news organizations in the UK, such as the BBC and *The Guardian*, recognized the importance of the real-time coverage of events and users' engagement in storytelling. Hence, they provided minute-by-minute updates of the event and encouraged their readers to contribute to the comprehensiveness of the terrorist attack coverage by providing their own eyewitness testimonies and photographs (Allan, 2006).

The live blogging practice has become an integral part of newsroom operations. Aside from journalists who cover breaking news, the format is strongly embraced by sports reporters as it allows them to deliver reports about games and matches as they happen. McEnnis (2016), who investigated live sports blogging, found that, similar to live blogs that cover other types of events, sports live blogs are usually created by a single journalist in the office. After interviewing 10 sports journalists in the UK-based news organization she addressed the need to rethink professional ideology of sports journalism, explaining that the live blogging process changes the role of journalists as they not only provide information, but also interact with audiences and serve as independent discussion mediators. Due to this conversational nature of the format, sports live blogs alternate between objectivism and subjectivism, frequently incorporating comments, chatting and jokes. This type of subjectivity is what Thurman and Walters (2013) earlier identified as the informal tone of live blogs.

Live blogs combine "conventional reporting with curation, where journalists sift and prioritize information from secondary sources and present it to the audience in close to real time, often incorporating their feedback" (Thurman & Walters, 2013, p. 83). When a breaking news event such as the London bombings occurs, media outlets can utilize the potential of user-

generated content because they are not always able to cover every single location of the event. Therefore, employing readers' photographs, videos or other information that depicts the event can be precious for the media outlets. Citizens may perform certain "journalism" roles by producing content for citizen journalism websites, as well as on blogs, on their own websites, or social media, but they can also directly contribute to the news websites which allow readers' input (Thurman, 2008). As a real-time-driven format predominantly used for breaking news, live blogs embrace citizen journalism. This practice does not come unexpectedly, considering that amateur journalists often emerge in times of crisis (Lindner, 2016), when they witness some event and report the information related to it (Allan, 2009).

Created by digital journalists and published on news websites, live blogs have changed the way stories online are being produced and disseminated. Journalists do not collect facts for a live blog at the scene, but predominantly in the newsrooms, which is the reason why they derive information from social media and other Internet platforms (Thurman & Walters, 2013). Thus, live blogs represent a personification of networked journalism, which is based on user-generated content, information derived from various websites, social media such as Twitter, and other sources (O'Mahony, 2014). User-generated content refers to "a process whereby ordinary people have an opportunity to participate with or contribute to professionally edited publications" (Hermida & Thurman, 2008, p. 344). That makes live blogs participatory-oriented, reader-friendly, and open to both eyewitness testimonies and second-hand accounts. Furthermore, through the large amount of source material that is being utilized by a single live blog, readers can get insight into the journalism routines that are occurring in the "backstage" (Pantic et al., 2017).

Therefore, live blogs are suitable for breaking news, but they have also been used for covering scheduled events such as trials, sports games, and live TV shows (O'Mahony, 2014; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). The news media started increasingly using live blogs for covering events partly as "a reaction to the way social media and blog sites introduced the idea of bite-sized chunks of content arranged in a chronological order" (Thurman & Newman, 2014, p. 656). Accordingly, live blogs are suitable for online news media which put high value on immediacy and brief, real-time updates of unfolding events.

Several studies on live blogs found that diverse opinions, providing information in real time, transparent sources, and convenience are some of the key reasons why live blogs are cherished by readers (Pantic, 2017; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Research on live blogs also demonstrated how popular this format is among users in comparison to other journalistic genres on news websites. Specifically, the study by Thurman and Walters (2013) showed that the median unique visitor numbers for live blogs were more than 200 percent higher than visits to traditional articles and picture galleries that covered the same subject. Furthermore, not only that live blogs on *The Guardian* website detected more visits than hard news and picture galleries, but they also kept readers engaged for a longer period. Specifically, *The Guardian* readers can engage in live blogging from 12 to 24 minutes a day, which is at least three times more than, for instance, the average time users spend reading US newspapers online (Thurman & Newman, 2014).

Being a journalistic genre that provides multiple account of events (Thurman & Walters, 2013), the live blog can be perceived as the format that opens space for various opinions, which is what may help people better evaluate and judge events (Phillips, 2015). Unlike the inverted

pyramid format which provides definitive information about social, political, and other issues, the facts in live blogs are fluid (Hermida, 2015), meaning that they can be questioned, debated, and subjected to change.

Research Questions

To detect new gratifications provided by digital media technologies, it is important to understand the contemporary media environment in which people consume information. Consumers are acquiring information from news organizations that were prompted to respond to the changes in the 21st century by adjusting well-established practices in collecting and disseminating news to allow more flexibility for journalism. New media culture allows audiences to provide their own accounts of events and feedback to the stories published on news websites. As Sundar and Limperos (2013) noticed, people have become so active on the Internet, that scholars rarely use the term "audiences" when referring to media consumers; instead, they address them as "users." Allan (2006) calls them "digital citizens" because they use various digital tools, such as cameras, smartphones, websites, and social media, to reach out to the wider population with stories they want to share.

Mitchelstein and Boczkowski (2009) addressed that scholars are moving toward a new paradigm in explaining journalism practices that are now being implemented within a more democratic media culture, which allows diverse viewpoints to be shared and different voices to be heard online. Their argument is in line with a position of scholars who believe in a necessity of rethinking the uses and gratifications approach as the Internet has introduced new gratification opportunities (Dimmick et al., 2004; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Staford et al., 2004; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). Specifically, what some scholars argue is that media gratifications are not based

exclusively on social and psychological needs, as previous research that focused predominantly on traditional media assumed. Instead, the nature of the 21st century media that people engage with can produce needs during users' interaction with them and break ground for new gratifications (Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

Users are exposed to a never-ending list of media and content choices. In the digital environment, they can select freely what they want to consume and even access personalized news (Diddi & LaRose, 2006; Hermida et al., 2012). With respect to news consumption, what has been detected as a format that drives traffic to the websites is the live blog – a journalistic genre more popular among readers than hard news or picture galleries (Thurman & Walters, 2013). The popularity of live blogs can be explained by employing a uses and gratifications approach, which poses that people understand their needs and seek for a source that would satisfy them (Katz et al., 1973). As it provides coverage of breaking news and scheduled events, the live blog, for instance, can fulfill the readers' need for surveillance. However, as the live blog is a web-native genre, it has the ability to provide users with greater gratification opportunities. Transparency, for instance, allows users not only to learn about the world around them by getting information about important events (i.e., information seeking/surveillance) but also to get acquainted with the ways journalist collect information they deliver to audiences (Karlsson, 2011). Furthermore, as scholars suggested that interaction with the medium itself can produce new needs (Sundar & Limperos, 2013), one may assume that using the Internet can prompt users to seek convenient, real-time coverage of events, and participate in storytelling, which is what the live blog allows. Participation, for instance, is one of the components of interactivity that can be identified in live blogs. Some studies showed that participation, which may include posting comments, sharing, and rating user-

generated content can reinforce consumption of this content and vice-versa (Shao, 2009). Thus, it will be valuable to explore if participation, along with transparency and convenience, is among the motives for the live-blog consumption.

Because of the differences that exist between new media and old media, some researchers advocate abandoning the old U&G model, while others believe that it can still be employed to assess new media (Ruggiero, 2000). This study will try to reconcile the two approaches by testing both well-established gratifications of media and introducing new ones. As the live blogs illuminate changes in news media content production and consumption, the study will explore what characteristics of the format contribute to their popularity and what motivates readers to consume live blogs. Therefore, the following list of research questions will be employed:

RQ1: What are readers' attitudes toward diverse characteristics of live blogs?

RQ2: What are the key motivators of live-blog consumption?

RQ2a: Are there differences between millennials and non-millennials in terms of motivations for reading live blogs?

RQ3: What are the key predictors of likelihood to read live blogs?

RQ4: Are there differences in likelihood to read live blogs based on demographic characteristics (i.e., sex and education), devices used to read live blogs, and social media activities?

RQ5: Are there differences among readers in motivation for participating in live blogging based on a type of live blog they read most often (e.g., politics, conflicts, social issues, entertainment, economics, sports)?

RQ6: To what extent do readers participate in live blogging?

RQ6a: What is the relationship between participation in live blogs and frequency of reading live blogs?

RQ7: What is the relationship between frequency of reading online news and frequency of reading live blogs?

RQ8: What is the relationship between frequency of reading online news and likelihood to read live blogs?

RQ9: What is the relationship between attitudes toward live blogs and motivation to participate in live blogging?

CHAPTER THREE

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To measure users' attitudes toward live blogs, motivations for using live blogs, and participation in live blogging, the study utilized a self-report survey, which is a frequently used method of measurement in communication science research (Hayes, 2005). Employing a self-administered questionnaire was suitable for the study because surveys allow collecting data from respondents by asking them questions related to a specific issue (Thayer-Hart, Dykema, Elver, & Schaeffer, 2010), which was the live blogging phenomenon in this case. Furthermore, the advantage of a survey is that it can address a vast array of objectives (Brick, 2011).

The survey designed for the current study was composed predominantly of closed-ended questions, as the finite set of answers was provided and the scales were employed to measure responses. Three open-ended questions were also included in the survey. These types of questions are frequently employed for obtaining responses that might have not been anticipated (Thayer-Hart et al., 2010).

Survey Development

There were two stages in designing the survey. During the first stage, the researcher created demographic questions, news consumption habits items, and a scale that measures attitudes toward live blogs. These items were incorporated in a questionnaire that was pilot-tested in spring 2016 for the purpose of another exploratory study on live blogs. The pilot-testing was a valuable part of the research, as it has further demonstrated the importance of studying live blogs, showing that

Internet users have the affinity toward consuming this journalistic format. Furthermore, the pilot survey enabled the author of the study to test reliabilty of the scale that measures attitudes toward live blogs. The second phase of the research took place in the summer and fall of 2016, when the author set up a dissertation proposal draft and modified the initial instrument by slightly altering the attitudes scale and adding items that measure uses and gratifications of live blogs and participation in live blogging.

Stage One

At the first stage of the development, the researcher explored literature on live blogging. As the live blog is a relatively new digital media artifact, it still presents an emerging area of research. However, there are several, predominantly exploratory studies on live blogs, that provide a valuable description of this phenomenon (e.g., O'Mahony, 2014; Pantic, 2017; Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). For instance, the exploratory research on live blogs conducted by Thurman and Walters (2013) contains a thorough analysis of the types of live blogs, their characteristics, and readers' perceptions of the format. Their analysis identified some of the key features of live blogs, including timeliness, participation, and utilization of diverse multimedia elements. The present study incorporated the live blog features detected by Thurman and Walters (2013) in a scale that measured attitudes toward live blogs.

After exploring the literature thoroughly, another step in developing a survey instrument was examining various live blogs to check whether some important news elements are incorporated in them that may have not been included in the aforementioned research studies. The author of this dissertation read thoroughly 30 live blogs on 10 news websites (i.e., three live blogs per each website). Specifically, the author first looked for the top 20 news websites on Alexa.com,

which provides detailed analytics on website visits worldwide. The author then selected the 10 most popular news websites which have their stories written in English. Prior to making the list, the researcher looked at each website to see whether it publishes live blogs. The final list included: CNN, *The New York Times*, Huffington Post, *The Guardian*, *Times of India*, the BBC, *The Washington Post*, Fox News, *The USA Today*, and Reuters. What the author looked for were common patterns in live blogging, such as employing multimedia files and utilization of social media sources within live blogs. The ideas were organized and a draft of survey questions was designed.

During the first stage of the study development, the researcher also conducted a series of formal and informal interviews with relevant stakeholders. Two formal interviews were conducted with journalists who engage in live blogging almost on a daily basis. One journalist was from the United States, while another one was from Serbia. In addition, there were a few informal conversations with readers and journalists who are aware of this format. Some of the conversations were conducted in person, while others were performed using telephone, Skype, and Facebook messenger. Clarity of the format, types of events covered in the live blog format, utilization of user-generated content, and the selection of information were among the topics discussed in these conversations. The conversations were based on a couple of big events that happened in 2014 and 2015 (e.g., winter storm in the U.S., 2014 Ukraine revolution, elections in Serbia). All journalists stated that they used live blogs for breaking news stories and that they heavily relied on social media, especially Twitter when live-blogging about events. Twitter was employed both as a source of information and a tool for information dissemination. Furthermore, everyone agreed that informal sources, such as citizen journalists, were important when news organizations covered

events in areas where they did not have reporters. One journalist said that user-generated content was critical for covering natural disasters, such as tornadoes and big storms, because ordinary people were using diverse digital media tools to provide content that was newsworthy and unique. Another journalist stated that she used live blogs both for covering domestic events, such as floods and elections, and international events (e.g., violent protests, revolutions). The journalist emphasized the importance of information credibility, stating that she tried to gather information only from the well-known sources when covering events.

While journalists spoke about their experience in live blogging, readers discussed the advantages of the live blog in comparison to the hard news format, as well as the format's flaws and their personal willingness to be engaged in live blogging. In these conversations, readers provided some important accounts related to their previous experience in the live-blog engagement and addressed major issues that go along with this format. One of the readers said that he felt excitement when reading a live blog that covered elections in Serbia, so he "had to post comments" on the news websites to express his opinion about the election results. Another reader said that he liked that he was able to constantly obtain new updates about a major winter storm in the U.S. in 2014.

During these conversations, the researcher was taking notes and highlighting main ideas. Overall, it was a useful, manageable, and affordable tool for gathering ideas that had not been anticipated. For instance, one reader complained that live blogs were sometimes difficult to follow because they "try to tell too much." Another reader also noticed that although she enjoyed reading live blogs, she would sometimes find it difficult to understand what was going on if she started reading the live blog a few hours after the event broke.

Following the interviews, the researcher reviewed the discussions, and evaluated them for relevant ideas. The central points were organized and compared with the draft questions about the live blog characteristics that were derived from the literature and detected by analyzing live blogs on the 10 most popular websites. These three steps (i.e., literature review, examining live blogs, and interviews with relevant stakeholders) were crucial in reformulating questions and creating a survey draft for pretesting. This part of the process was important in identifying questions that were confusing and not poorly written, making it difficult for respondents to understand them (Krosnick, 1999). During the pretesting stage, university professors, a survey research expert, a group of PhD students, and a group of journalists who work in a digital media environment were consulted about the clarity of the survey items. Some of the consultations were conducted in person while other were conducted via video and voice call app – Skype. After that, the survey instrument was revised and refined.

The survey was pilot tested in April 2016 at a university in the U.S. South. For the purpose of the pilot testing, a convenience sample composed of 324 undergraduate students was employed. An approval from the university's institutional review board was obtained before distributing the survey. Data were collected online, using a software program for collecting responses anonymously. This step was taken to help the researcher assess reliability and validity of the newly-established instrument which measured readers' attitudes toward this news format.

Stage Two

During the second stage of the study design, the instrument which was pilot-tested in 2016 was modified. As the researcher explored the literature on a uses and gratification approach, new items were added to the survey instrument. Those items were included to measure uses and

gratifications of the live blogs. Several validated scales that measure gratifications sought from live blogs were included in the instrument. Those scales are: information seeking, entertainment, social utility, and pass time (Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). In addition, the author created several new items to access new gratifications that users may seek from the media, including transparency, participation, immediacy, and convenience (Deuze, 2004; Hermida, 2012; Hermida & Thurman, 2008; Karlsson, 2011; Thurman & Walters, 2013).

In the second stage of the instrument design, two items that measure participation in live blogging were added to the questionnaire and the attitudes scale was slightly modified after pilot testing the survey. Specifically, the item included in the attitudes scale that illustrated "balance of opinions" in live blogs was removed as it was similar to the variable "live blogs employ multiple sources." Another modification was adding a statement "I feel like it is hard to follow live blogs due to the great number of various news items they employ." Once the new items had been added to the instrument, the survey was pretested with a sample of 20 undergraduate students to ensure that questions were clear and well written (Table 1).

Table 1: Survey Development

STAGE ONE (Step by step)	
Task	**Description**
Literature review on live blogging	Several major characteristics of live blogs were derived from the literature (e.g., participation, multimedia elements, real-time information, reverse order of information).

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

STAGE ONE (Step by step)	
Task	**Description**
Examining live blogs on websites	The researcher examined 30 live blogs on 10 websites (i.e., three live blogs per website) to identify more characteristics of the format (e.g., utilizing social media content, employing multiple sources).
Interviews with stakeholders	Formal and informal interviews with journalists and readers about live-blogging were conducted.
Attitudes scale design	Based on the characteristics of live blogs, a scale measuring users' attitudes toward this format was created.
Creating an instrument draft for pretesting	A draft of questions related to characteristics of live blogs, demographics, and news consumption habits was designed.
Pretesting	University professors, a survey research expert, a group of PhD students, and a group of journalists were consulted about the clarity of the survey items.
Instrument revision	The instrument was refined after the pretesting.
Pilot testing	The instrument was pilot-tested at a university in the U.S. South in April 2016.
STAGE TWO (Step by Step)	
Exploring literature on U&G and new journalism practices	Several scales that measure U&G of media were derived from the literature. Additional scales were created based on the literature on new potential uses and gratifications of media.
Adding new items	New items were included in the instrument to assess uses and gratifications of live blogs and participation in live blogging.
Modification of the attitudes scale	One item was removed, while another one was added to the attitudes scale.
Pretesting	The refined survey instrument was pretested with a sample of 20 students.

Sample and Procedure

Participants in the current study were recruited in two ways. First, participants were recruited from a public university in the U.S. South. They were undergraduate students enrolled in courses at the university's college of communication. The participants were given course credit for participating in the study. Those who did not wish to participate had the opportunity to select an alternative assignment. Only individuals who were 18 or older were allowed to participate in the study. Second, participants were recruited from the Communication, Research, and Theory Network (CRTNET) listserv, which is operated by the National Communication Association. The listserv reaches anyone who has registered and consented to receive the listserv content.

The data collection started on December 7, 2016, when the author sent out a link to the survey to potential participants, after obtaining an approval from the university's institutional review board. While members of the CRTNET received the survey link through the network listserv, students were notified about the study by their professors and instructors, who shared the link with them. Two follow-up emails were sent in January and February 2017, to remind respondents about the opportunity to participate in the study about live blogs. The survey was closed on March 4, 2017. Participants from both groups were presented with an informed consent and given the opportunity to withdraw from the study if they wished to do so. Those who agreed to continue were asked to complete the survey.

The populations selected for the study were small and easy to reach. The survey was conducted online, using a web-based Qualtrics software for surveys. Using a web survey as a mode of data collection is convenient, flexible, fast, cost effective, and a high-privacy way of obtaining responses from participants (Couper, 2011). Furthermore, the technology employed for conducting

a web survey can prevent respondents from providing multiple responses to a single question (Carbonaro, Bainbridge, & Wolodko, 2002). Another advantage is that it enables direct import of the data into a software that will be used for an analysis (Carbonaro et al., 2002).

A total of 553 respondents accepted the request to participate in the study. There was a screening question at the beginning of the survey asking respondents how often they read live blogs. About 30%, or 164 respondents who answered "never," were automatically terminated from the survey. After closing the survey, the data obtained from the two groups of respondents were imported into SPSS and merged prior to conducting the analysis. The initial data cleaning found that 50 respondents did not complete the survey, so their responses were removed from the data set. Hence, the total number of completed responses for the entire survey was 339. Several significant studies on uses and gratification approach also utilized a sample of about 300 to 600 respondents to explore the uses and gratifications of media (e.g., Bantz, 1982; Diddi & LaRose, 2006; Gerson, 1966; Palmgreen et al., 1981).

About 67.3% or 228 respondents identified as females, 108 or 31.9% were males, while three participants or .9% selected "prefer not to answer" response when asked about their biological sex. In terms of race, the vast majority of respondents were white (N = 278 or 82%). The majority of respondents were millennials, aged from 18 to 34 years old (N = 299 or 88.2%) when the study was conducted. The remaining 40 responses or 11.8% came from respondents who were 35 or older. More than 82% of the respondents were undergraduate students, while 11.2% were graduate students and 6.2% held a PhD degree (See Table 2 for more details).

Table 2: Demographics (*N* = 339)

Variable Name	Category	Frequency	%
Sex	Female	228	67.3
	Male	108	31.9
	No response	3	.9
Age	18-34	299	88.2
	35 and above	40	11.8
Race	White	278	82.0
	African-American or Black	20	5.9
	Asian	14	4.1
	Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	11	3.2
	Some other race, ethnicity or origin	10	2.9
	Middle Eastern or North African	3	.9
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	2	.6
	American Indian or Alaska Native	1	.3
Education/Class Standing	Junior	89	26.3
	Freshman	85	25.1
	Sophomore	60	17.7
	Senior	45	13.3
	Graduate student	38	11.2
	PhD	22	6.2
	No response	1	.3

About 57.5% of respondents (N = 195) provided a response to an open-ended question that asked them what website they visit most often to read live blogs. The majority of respondents listed prominent news websites, such as CNN, *The New York Times*, Huffington Post, *The Guardian*, the BBC, *The Washington Post*, and Fox News. These were also the websites that the author of the study analyzed in the Stage one of the survey design, with an aim to identify common characteristics of live blogs on diverse news web pages.

CNN was the most frequently listed website among the respondents (N = 64), followed by Fox News (N = 29) and *The New York Times* (N = 22). Seven respondents listed ABC.com as the website they visit most often to read live blogs, while The BBC, *The Washington Post* and Buzzfeed were listed six times. Other sources for live blogs included Al Jazeera, *Times of India*, ESPN, *USA Today*, and *The Daily Mail.*

Measures

The survey instrument was employed to assess the following variables: users' attitudes toward live blogs, motivations for using live blogs, online news consumption habits, participation in live blogging, and socio-demographic variables. There were 19 blocks of questions in the instrument. The goal of the researcher was to create a survey that would not be too long to produce fatigue among respondents, or too short which could result in inaccurate measurements of the study constructs (Fife-Schaw, 2006).

Likert-type scales were employed to measure attitudes and motivations for using live blogs. Because the target sample was small, the researcher decided to use a 5-point scale instead of a 7-point scale or a 10-point scale. Scales with more options are usually employed with bigger samples

to give greater discrimination (Fife-Schaw, 2006). Responses were labeled with words: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree because they provide more reliable data than responses labeled with numbers (Thayer-Hart et al., 2010, p.10).

Attitudes

The author listed seven statements which described the characteristics of live blogs, asking respondents to what extent they agree with each of the statements. They included: 1) I feel it is important that live blogs place information in reverse chronological order, so I get to read the latest information first; 2) I feel it is important that live blogs provide information in real time; 3) I feel it is important that live blogs include information gathered from the social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; 4) I feel it is important that live blogs provide various multimedia file formats such as videos, photographs, graphics, and audio files; 5) I feel it is important that live blogs employ multiple sources; 6) I feel it is important that live blogs encourage readers to participate in a live blog creation; 7) I feel like it is hard to follow live blogs due to the great number of various news items (i.e., sources, photographs, videos, social media posts) they employ (look at Appendix C and D for more details).

These items were computed in a scale to measure attitudes toward live blogs and provide the answers to RQ9 (i.e., What is the relationship between attitudes toward live blogs and motivation to participate in live blogging). Reliability of the scale was assessed through the internal consistency, which measures the relationships among the items simultaneously (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Cronbach's alpha was used to measure average correlations among responses to estimate consistency of items. Establishing reliability of the measurement indicates that results

obtained by the instrument from the same objects provide consistent results each time the measurement is applied (Babbie, 2007; Huck, 2008).

The seven items in the attitudes scale produced the reliability of .70. According to Hayes (2005), Cronbach's alpha of .70 "is generally considered the magic number" for the scale's reliability (p. 128). Israel (1992) argues that .60 is acceptable for exploratory research, while the value of .80 and above shows that items have good internal consistency. To find the right balance, the reliability for the current scale was slightly increased by removing the item "it is hard to follow live blogs." Finally, the scale used for the analysis had six items and the scale's reliability was .75.

The validity of the measurement of attitudes toward live blogs was established to address the measurement of this construct. Several measures were utilized to assess the validity. First, the researcher used face validity to determine whether the measure is valid on its face (Babbie, 2007). It can be said that live blogs provide constant updates by looking at various websites to see how live blogs display a timestamp every time they update a story. Second, the research conducted so far contributes to the validity of the instrument by providing the basis for the concepts' operationalization. Although there are just a few research studies on live blogging, they provide an abundance of valuable data about the live blog features. The detailed descriptions of the characteristics of live blogs helped develop a valid instrument that measures the readers' attitudes toward this news media format. Third, live bloggers, the experts in this matter, have been consulted within the process of survey creation, which also contributed to the instrument's validity.

Motivations

Several questions were employed to assess motivations for using live blogs. Those include: information seeking/surveillance; entertainment; social utility; pass time; transparency;

participation; immediacy; convenience. Information seeking/surveillance, entertainment, social utility and pass time items were borrowed from the studies that measured motivations for using the web for political information and factors that motivate people to use the Internet (i.e., Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). They were slightly adjusted to assess motivation for using live blogs. The items that assess transparency, participation, immediacy, and convenience were designed for this study based on the literature that explores new trends in journalism. According to the reliability analysis, the items were highly correlated (Cronbach's alpha = .91).

Information seeking/surveillance was assessed by employing the following items: 1) I read live blogs to obtain information about events; 2) I read live blogs to get information for free; 3) I read live blogs to keep up with main issues of the day. **Entertainment** as a motivation for using live blogs incorporated the following four statements: 1) I read live blogs because it is entertaining; 2) I read live blogs because it is exciting; 3) I read live blogs to relax; 4) I read live blogs because it is enjoyable. **Social utility** was assessed with the following statements: 1) I read live blogs to have something to talk about with others; 2) I read live blogs to get ammunition in arguments with others. **Pass time** incorporated three statements: 1) I read live blogs to pass time when I am bored; 2) I read live blogs when I have nothing better to do; 3) I read live blogs to occupy my time.

Aside from the variables that have been traditionally used by scholars to explain the uses and gratifications of media, new variables were added to the instrument to examine thoroughly the live blog as a news format and what drives users to consume it. **Transparency** as a principle that has become prominent in the digital world (Hermida, 2015; Karlsson 2011; Singer, 2015) was assessed through a single item that read: I read live blogs because I like seeing how the reported

information is obtained by the journalist. After examining the literature on live blogs (i.e., Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013) and a potential for participation in the live blogging, the researcher designed the following statements to assess **participation** as a motive to consume this format. Those include: 1) I read live blogs because they encourage me to share information about an event with a journalist who is live-blogging about that event. 2) I read live blogs because the comments I share on social media about events can become part of the live blogs; 3) I read live blogs because they allow me to post comments below them on news websites; 4) I read live blogs because they allow me to post comments below the live blog links shared on the news websites' social media accounts. **Immediacy** was operationalized through the following items: 1) I read live blogs because they publish updates about an event in real time (i.e., as the event happens); 2) I read live blogs because I like to see new updates about an event when I refresh my page. **Convenience** was assessed by asking respondents to state their agreement with the following statements: 1) I read live blogs because I can access them anytime; 2) I read live blogs because I can access them anywhere (See Table 3). The idea for these items came from the gratification opportunities niche dimension designed by Dimmick et al. (2004), which listed convenient access to information as one of potential media gratifications.

Table 3: Items Assessing Motivations for Using Live Blogs

Variable	**Statement**
Information seeking/ Surveillance	I read live blogs to obtain information about events.
	I read live blogs to get information for free.
	I read live blogs to keep up with main issues of the day.

(Continued)

Table 3 (Continued)

Variable	Statement
Entertainment	I read live blogs because it is entertaining.
	I read live blogs because it is exciting.
	I read live blogs to relax.
	I read live blogs because it is enjoyable.
Social utility	I read live blogs to have something to talk about with others.
	I read live blogs to get ammunition in arguments with others.
Pass time	I read live blogs to pass time when I am bored.
	I read live blogs when I have nothing better to do.
	I read live blogs to occupy my time.
Transparency	I read live blogs because I like seeing how the reported information is obtained by the journalist.
Participation	I read live blogs because they encourage me to share information about an event with a journalist who is live-blogging about that event.
	I read live blogs because the comments I share on social media about events can become part of the live blogs.
	I read live blogs because they allow me to post comments below them on news websites.
	I read live blogs because they allow me to post comments below the live blog links shared on the news websites' social media accounts.
Immediacy	I read live blogs because they publish updates about an event in real time (i.e., as the event happens).
	I read live blogs because I like to see new updates about an event when I refresh my page.
Convenience	I read live blogs because I can access them anytime.
	I read live blogs because I can access them anywhere.

Participation and Social Media Habits

To explore participation in live blogs and users' social media habits, the researcher designed several items. Participation was assessed with two questions: "How often do you post comments on live blogs?" and "How often do you respond to other people's comments on live blogs?" The following set of answer choices was offered: 1) Never; 2) Once a month or less; 3) 2-3 times a month; 4) Once a week; 5) 2-4 times a week; 6) 5-6 times a week; 7) Once a day; 8) Several times a day. The researcher also asked two questions pertaining to social media activities of the respondents. Those include: "Do you share news on social media?" and "What social media platform are you most likely to use to share news?"

Online News Consumption Habits

To respond to several RQs, the researcher also assessed online news consumption habits of respondents. Accordingly, users were asked to state how often they read online news and how often they read live blogs. The following set of responses was offered for each question: 1) Never; 2) Once a month or less; 3) 2-3 times a month; 4) Once a week; 5) 2-4 times a week; 6) 5-6 times a week; 7) Once a day; 8) Several times a day. In addition, the survey measured the likelihood of reading live blogs by employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from very unlikely to very likely.

Respondents were also asked what type of live blogs they read most often on the Internet. They were provided with the following set of responses: 1) politics (national and international); 2) conflicts (armed clashes, terrorism); 3) social issues (education, human rights, protests, accidents, environmental issues); 4) economics (money, business, economy, stock market); 5) entertainment (celebrities, culture, arts, TV shows); 6) sports; 7) other (open-ended); 8) no preference; 9) I do not read live blogs. To distinguish between live blogs on different websites, the respondents were

asked to state what news website they visited most often to read live blogs. This was an open-ended question that allowed users to type in their response.

Furthermore, respondents were asked what type of news format for daily news they preferred to read online. Respondents had the opportunity to choose among four responses: 1) Traditional news; 2) Live blog; 3) I like reading both traditional news articles and live blogs; 4) I don't read the news online. They were also asked what social media platform they are most likely to use to share news. The following categories were offered: 1) Facebook; 2) Twitter; 3) YouTube; 4) Google Plus; 5) Instagram; 6) Pinterest; 7) LinkedIn; 8) Tumblr; 9) Snapchat; 10) Other (open-ended). To determine what device they use the most often to access live blogs, respondents were asked to choose from the following set of items: 1) Desktop computer; 2) Laptop; 3) Tablet; 4) Smartphone; 5) iPod; 6) Other (open-ended).

Socio-demographic Variables

Several demographic questions were incorporated in the survey to describe the sample. Those include: sex, age, race, class standing, and education. Respondents were asked about their age with the following open-ended question: "What was your age on your last birthday?" A survey question created to distinguish males and females asked "What is your biological sex?" Respondents were also asked to state what their race is. The following set of responses was offered: 1) Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin; 2) White; 3) African American or Black; 4) Asian; 5) American Indian or Alaska Native; 6) Middle Eastern or North African; 7) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; 8) Some other race, ethnicity, or origin. As one group of respondents were university students, they were also asked to specify whether they are: 1) freshman; 2) sophomore; 3) junior; 4) senior. The respondents from the CRTNET were asked about the level of education

they have completed. The following set of responses was offered: 1) Some High School (no Diploma); 2) GED/High School Diploma; 3) Technical Diploma/Certificate; 4) Some college (no degree obtained); 5) Associates Degree; 6) Bachelor's Degree; 7) Master's Degree; 8) Professional Degree (e.g., MD, JD); 9) Doctoral Degree (e.g, Ph.D., PsyD, Ed.D.); 10) Prefer not to answer.

Data Cleaning

A codebook that includes detailed explanations about each variable, including variables' names and labels, was created. In addition, a detailed data analysis plan was designed and the data were imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) software. A frequency analysis was run to show initial data errors, including spelling errors, outliers, and missing data. After removing the errors from the data set, the researcher modified the variables by recoding and transforming some of them and creating the new ones in order to begin the analysis. For instance, the variable "age" was transformed into a new variable that grouped respondents into millennials, aged from 18 to 34, and non-millennials, or those who were 35 or older at the time the author was collecting data for the study. Furthermore, the questions that asked respondents about class standing and the level of education completed were transformed into a single variable named "education" comprised of the following groups: 1) freshman; 2) sophomore; 3) junior; 4) senior; 5) graduate student; 6) PhD; 7) no response.

Missing data were replaced with respective mean values. The median, mean, and mode were compared to test the normality of the distribution. Finally, one more frequency and descriptive test were performed to describe the sample and prepare for the more demanding analysis.

After cleaning the data, the researcher ran a series of parametric tests. As an example, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed in SPSS to determine differences in motivation for participating in live blogging based on a type of live blog participants read most often. An important assumption of ANOVA is homogeneity of variances, which the author tested using the Levene test and the Brown-Forsythe test. After the homogeneity of variance was met, the author analyzed the results of ANOVA tests.

Aside from the analysis of variance, several Pearson's correlation tests were conducted to determine the relationships between variables. For instance, one test was performed to investigate the relationship between attitudes toward live blogs and motivation for reading live blogs. Another test explained the relationship between participation in live blogs and frequency of reading live blogs.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Several analyses were performed in SPSS to address the research questions. The study results indicate that readers nurture positive attitudes toward live blogs, but that their participation in live blogging is infrequent. Another important finding is that immediacy emerged as the key variable that explains live-blog consumption. In addition, the study found significant differences in likelihood to read live blogs based on the respondents' sex, devices used to access live blogs, and social media platforms they most frequently engage with.

The key findings of the study showed that readers use live blogs because they provide updates about events in real time, allow convenient access to information and supply news consumers with diverse viewpoints about a vast array of occurrences. Descriptive statistics showed that respondents expressed the most positive attitude toward the characteristic of live blog's ability to employ multiple sources to illustrate events. Providing real-time information was second on the list of most-liked features of live blogs.

According to the regression analysis utilized in the study, immediacy was the only motive that predicted the users' likelihood to read live blogs. Immediacy was also in the group of the major drivers of the live-blog consumption, along with convenience and surveillance. Such finding indicates that people consume live blogs because they allow them to be informed about what is happening in the world around them through real-time updates about events that they can read at any place and anytime.

As expected, the analysis showed that frequency of reading live blogs was related to frequency of reading online news. In line with that, the respondents who were likely to read news on the Internet on a regular basis were also likely to read live blogs. Additionally, the analysis indicated that the live-blog consumption can also be explained through people's activities on social media and the devices they use to read live blogs. Specifically, the highest likelihood to read live blogs was detected among the respondents who use laptops and smartphones to access live blogs and those who are active on social media.

Several tests were employed in the study to assess participation in live blogs. Descriptive statistics suggested that the study respondents were by no means interested in participating in live blogging. With respect to participation as a motive for the live-blog use, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient indicated that motivation to participate in live blogging was positively related to attitudes toward live blogs. Furthermore, the results showed that respondents who read live blogs that cover entertainment topics were more motivated to participate in live blogs than those who read live blogs about politics, social issues, sports, conflicts, and economics.

RQ1: Readers' Attitudes Toward Live Blogs

RQ1 asked about readers' attitudes toward live blogs. The analysis performed in SPSS showed that the respondents had the most favorable position toward the live-blog characteristic of utilizing multiple sources when covering events (M = 4.01, SD = .86). Second highest-rated characteristic of live blogs was providing information in real time (M = 3.94, SD = .85) followed by providing various multimedia file formats (M = 3.87, SD = .87). The analysis also showed that respondents felt neutral toward the live blog's participatory nature (See Table 4 for more details).

Table 4: Attitudes toward Live Blogs

Characteristics of Live Blogs	M	SD
Employ multiple sources	4.01	.86
Provide information in real time	3.94	.85
Provide various multimedia file formats	3.87	.87
Place information in reverse chronological order	3.65	.92
Include information from social media	3.35	.98
Encourage readers to participate in a live-blog creation	3.23	.92
Hard to follow	3.03	.98

RQ2: What Are the Key Motivators of Live-Blog Consumption?

Descriptive statistic tests were utilized to address RQ2 and determine what motivates users to consume live blogs. According to the analysis, immediacy, which translates into getting updates about events in real time, was the key motivating factor for live-blog use (M = 3.70, SD = .76). Immediacy was followed by convenience (M = 3.65, SD = .83) and information seeking (M = 3.64; SD = .68). On the list of motivations for live-blog consumption, the lowest average score was detected for participation in live blogging (M = 2.74, SD = .95). See Table 5 for more details about the motivations for using live blogs.

Table 5: Motivations for Using Live Blogs

Motivations	M	SD
Immediacy	3.70	.76
Convenience	3.65	.83
Information seeking/surveillance	3.64	.68
Pass time	3.27	.89
Entertainment	3.23	.74
Transparency	3.17	.97
Social utility	3.01	.90
Participation	2.74	.95

Obtaining Breaking News as a Motivation for Using Live Blogs

There was an open-ended question in the survey, asking respondents if there is anything else that comes to their mind when they think about the reasons they read live blogs. From the users' responses, one concept emerged that further explains the users' motivation for engaging in live blogging. Specifically, the most frequently listed motivation was using live blogs for obtaining breaking news and news about important scheduled events. An example of such a statement is: "I tend to read live blogs when there is a major news event happening, or sometimes after awards shows." In line with that, another respondent stated: "I only really use live blogs when a huge event is/was occurring, things like national/international tragedies or high-stakes political events like the 2016 presidential race, the inauguration, etc." See Table 6.

Table 6: Other Motivations for Using Live Blogs

Concept	Statement
Breaking News	I like them for breaking news and major news events. I don't use them for routine, everyday news.
	I only really use live blogs when a huge event is/was occurring, things like national/international tragedies or high-stakes political events like the 2016 presidential race, the inauguration, etc.
	I read live blogs about crisis events only.
	I tend to read live blogs when there is a major news event happening, or sometimes after awards shows.
	I use them primarily for finding information on breaking news.
	I would say that live blogs do not make up the majority of my news intake - they're more of an occasional thing I'll come across or look for in specific events - sports that I can't watch live, political events, major world events. I read them mostly once in a blue moon.
	Usually live blogs are about breaking news (or very important news).
	Live blogging during presidential debates are particularly beneficial, as they include transcripts of what was said as well as reporting and fact-checking on those statements.
	N/A, I really only read them for political debates.

$N = 9$

RQ2a: Differences in Motivations between Millennials and Non-Millennials

As the sample was composed of the respondents of different age categories, the study divided them into two groups to determine if there were differences between them in motivations for consuming live blogs. Two groups were analyzed: Millennial generation of the respondents that represented people aged from 18 to 34 in 2016, when the data collection started. The main characteristic of this cohort group is that it is technology-driven (Moore, 2012). The other group was comprised of non-millennials or adults aged 35 years or more. According to the multiple tests performed in SPSS, there were statistically significant differences in terms of motivations for reading live blogs between the two groups. A one-way between groups analysis of variance showed the differences between groups for the following list of motivations: social utility, $F(1, 337) = 4.97$, $p = .026$; pass time, $F(1, 337) = 38.31$, $p < .001$; participation, $F(1, 337) = 19.27$, $p < .001$; immediacy, $F(1, 337) = 5.12$; $p = .024$; transparency $F(1, 337) = 9.79$, $p = .002$; and entertainment, $F(1, 337) = 24.52$, $p < .001$. The Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was not significant, indicating that the homogeneity of variance was not violated, even though the sample sizes were unequal. Based on the analysis, social utility, passing time, transparency, and entertainment were important motivating factors for using live blogs for millennials, while the same did not represent motivating factors for non-millennials to consume live blogs (Table 7).

Table 7: Mean Scores for Motivations for Using Live Blogs for Millennials and Non-Millennials

Motivation	Group	N	M	SD
Immediacy	Millennials	299	3.66	.76
	Non-millennials	40	3.95	.71
Information Seeking	Millennials	299	3.65	.66
	Non-millennials	40	3.56	.84
Convenience	Millennials	299	3.64	.82
	Non-millennials	40	3.69	.94
Pass Time	Millennials	299	3.37	.83
	Non-millennials	40	2.49	.92
Entertainment	Millennials	299	3.30	.71
	Non-millennials	40	2.70	.74
Transparency	Millennials	299	3.23	.92
	Non-millennials	40	2.73	1.18
Social Utility	Millennials	299	3.05	.88
	Non-millennials	40	2.71	1.07
Participation	Millennials	299	2.82	.90
	Non-millennials	40	2.14	1.15

RQ3: Key Predictors of Likelihood to Read Live Blogs

RQ3 asked about predictors of likelihood to read live blogs. A multiple linear regression test was performed in SPSS with entering 10 variables: eight motivating factors for live-blog use (i.e., information seeking, entertainment, social utility, pass time, transparency, participation, immediacy, convenience), one variable reflecting participation in live blogs, and one variable that reflected attitudes toward live blogs. These variables were treated as potential predictors of

likelihood to read live blogs. As indicated by the adjusted R^2, the total variance explained by the model was 8% with the model being statistically significant, F (10, 328) = 4.07, $p < .001$. However, immediacy was the only variable in the model that emerged as a significant predictor of likelihood to read live blogs, $b = .203$, $p = .002$. Other variables did not significantly predict the likelihood to read live blogs.

RQ4: Differences in Likelihood to Read Live Blogs

The study also investigated characteristics of respondents who are likely to read live blogs. Accordingly, RQ4 asked if there were differences in likelihood to read live blogs based on demographic characteristics (i.e., sex and education), devices used to read live blogs, and social media activities. With respect to sex, the results showed that there was a statistically significant difference between males and females in their likelihood to read live blogs F(2, 336) = 3.01, p = .05. Females were more likely to read live blogs than males (M = 3.62, SD = .98; M = 3.34, SD = 1.13). However, the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = 0.02$), meaning that the variance in the likelihood to read live blogs was not the result of the respondents' sex to a great extent.

No statistically significant differences were found based on the respondents' education with respect to their likelihood to read live blogs, F(5, 333) = 1.39, p = .231. On the other hand, statistically significant differences were found between the respondents based on the device they use most often to read live blogs, F(4, 334) = 3.59, p = .007 (See Table 8). The effect size was close to medium ($\eta^2 = 0.04$) indicating that the variance in the likelihood to read live blogs could be accounted by the device the respondents use to read live blogs. According to the analysis, the highest likelihood to consume live blogs was detected among those who use laptops and

smartphones to access live blogs (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = 1.10; *M* = 3.58, *SD* = .98). They were followed by those who use desktop computers (*M* = 3.24, *SD* = 1.03), tablets (*M* = 3.00, *SD* = 1.13) and other devices (*M* = 2.00, *SD* = .82).

Table 8: One-Way Analysis of Variance of Likelihood to Read Live Blogs Based on Device Respondents Use to Access Live Blogs

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between groups	15.03	4	3.76	3.59	.007
Within groups	349.50	334	1.05		

There was also a statistically significant difference in likelihood to read live blogs between those who share news on social media and those who don't engage in such activity, F(1, 337) = 9.48, *p* = .002. The respondents who share news were more likely to read live blogs (*M* = 3.64, *SD* = 1.02) than those who don't share news on social media (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 1.05). In terms of the most preferred social media platform to share news, those who use Twitter to share news were slightly more likely to read live blogs (*M* = 3.68, *SD* = .96) than those who are more likely to use Facebook (*M* = 3.50, *SD* = 1.08) or other social media (e.g., YouTube, Google Plus) to share the news (*M* = 3.30, *SD* = 1.05). However, a one-way analysis of variance found that the differences between these groups were not statistically significant, F(2, 336) = 2.48, *p* = .086.

RQ5: Differences in Motivation for Participating in Live Blogging Based on Types of Live Blogs

RQ5 explored the differences among readers in their motivation to participate in live blogging based on a type of live blog they read most often. Seven categories of respondents were created based on the seven types of live blogs they read: politics, conflicts, social issues, entertainment, economics, sports, and other issues. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare these groups. The test showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the respondents based on a type of live blog they were likely to read, $F(6, 332) = 3.31$, $p = .004$. Three variables contributed to these results. Specifically, the participants who read live blogs about entertainment ($M = 3.14$, $SD = .83$) were statistically different from those who read live blogs about politics ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.00$) in terms of participation as gratification they seek in live blogs. The difference was statistically significant at $p = .001$. Furthermore, the mean score for the respondents who are likely to read live blogs on entertainment was significantly different from those who read live blogs about social issues ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .98$) at $p = .008$.

RQ6: Readers Participation in Live Blogging

This study also investigated to what extent do readers participate in live blogging. The respondents were asked two questions pertaining to their participation in live blogging: how often they post comments on live blogs and how often they respond to other people's comments. The responses ranged from "never" to "several times a day." According to the results, the respondents under study were not participatory oriented as 78.2% selected the response "never" when asked about the frequency of posting comments. There was a small number of respondents who would

post comments on live blogs frequently, once a month or more. Those respondents were females, belonging to the millennial age cohort, and accessing live blogs on their laptops and smartphones. Look at Table 9 to see the number of respondents who selected: 1) never; 2) once a month or less; 3) 2-3 times a month; 4) once a week; 5) 2-4 times a week; and 6) once a day, when asked about the frequency of posting comments on live blogs. With respect to responding to other people's comments, 82.9% respondents stated that they "never" engaged in such activity. They were predominantly millennials who use laptops to access live blogs. See Table 10 for more details.

Table 9: Participation in Live Blogging – Frequency of Posting Comments on Live Blogs

		Frequency of posting comments on live blogs					
		Never	**Once a month or less**	**2-3 times a month**	**Once a week**	**2-4 times a week**	**Once a day**
Sex	**Male**	75	21	6	3	2	1
	Female	187	26	4	6	5	0
	Prefer not to answer	3	0	0	0	0	0
Age cohort	**Millennials**	233	42	10	7	6	1
	Non-millennials	32	5	0	2	1	0
Education	**Undergraduates**	217	38	10	7	6	1
	Graduates	32	6	0	0	0	0
	PhD	16	3	0	2	1	0
Most used social Media	**Facebook**	144	22	3	2	4	0
	Twitter	80	19	5	4	3	0

(Continued)

Table 9 (Continued)

		Frequency of posting comments on live blogs					
		Never	**Once a month or less**	**2-3 times a month**	**Once a week**	**2-4 times a week**	**Once a day**
Most used social media	**Other**	41	6	2	3	0	1
Device used	**Desktop**	8	6	0	3	0	0
	Laptop	72	9	5	3	3	1
	Tablet	7	5	0	0	0	0
	Smartphone	174	27	5	3	4	0
	Other	4	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	**265**	**47**	**10**	**9**	**7**	**1**

Table 10: Participation in Live Blogging – Frequency of Responding to Comments on Live Blogs

		Frequency of responding to other people's comments on live blogs					
		Never	**Once a month or less**	**2-3 times a month**	**Once a week**	**2-4 times a week**	**Once a day**
Sex	**Male**	75	19	6	4	2	2
	Female	203	15	2	5	3	0
	Prefer not to answer	3	0	0	0	0	0
Age cohort	**Millennials**	248	30	8	6	5	2
	Non-millennials	33	4	0	3	0	0

(Continued)

Table 10 (Continued)

		Frequency of responding to other people's comments on live blogs					
		Never	**Once a month or less**	**2-3 times a month**	**Once a week**	**2-4 times a week**	**Once a day**
Education	**Undergraduates**	232	27	8	5	5	2
	Graduates	33	4	0	1	0	0
	PhD	16	3	0	3	0	0
Most used social media	**Facebook**	153	15	2	2	2	1
	Twitter	85	14	4	6	2	0
	Other	43	5	2	1	1	1
Device used	**Desktop**	10	4	0	2	1	0
	Laptop	74	7	1	7	2	2
	Tablet	8	4	0	0	0	0
	Smartphone	185	19	7	0	2	0
	Other	4	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	**281**	**34**	**8**	**9**	**5**	**2**

Relationship between Participation and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs

RQ6a asked about the relationship between participation in live blogs and frequency of reading live blogs. The analysis showed that there was a positive linear relationship between participation in live blogs and frequency of reading live blogs. Those who were reading live blogs

more often were also more likely to participate in them. See Table 11 for more details about the relationship between the two variables.

Table 11: Bivariate Correlations between Participation in Live Blogs and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs

Subscale	Participation in live blogs
Frequency of reading live blogs	.223**

Note: Correlations marked with asterisks (**) were significant at $p < .001$

RQ7: Relationship between Frequency of Reading Online News and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs

With respect to the relationship between frequency of reading online news and frequency of reading live blogs (RQ7), the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient found a positive linear relationship between the two variables. As the test results suggest, those who frequently read online news were also likely to frequently read live blogs (See Table 12 for more details).

Table 12: Bivariate Correlations between Frequency of Reading Online News and Frequency of Reading Live Blogs

Subscale	Frequency of reading live blogs
Frequency of reading online news	.214**

Note: Correlations marked with asterisks (**) were significant at $p < .001$

RQ8: Frequency of Reading Online News and Likelihood to Read Live Blogs

RQ8 examined the relationship between frequency of reading online news and likelihood to read live blogs. The Pearson test showed that there was a weak, but statistically significant correlation between the two variables ($r = .23$, $p < .001$). According to this test, those respondents who regularly read online news were also likely to read live blogs (See Table 13 for details).

Table 13: Bivariate Correlations between Frequency of Reading Online News and Likelihood to Read Live Blogs

Subscale	Likelihood to read live blogs
Frequency of reading online news	.231**

Note: Correlations marked with asterisks (**) were significant at $p < .001$

RQ9: Relationship between Attitudes Toward Live Blogs and Motivation to Participate in Live Blogging

Finally, the study investigated the relationship between attitudes toward live blogs and motivation to participate in live blogging (RQ9). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient showed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r = .11$, $p < .05$). Those who nurtured positive attitudes toward live blogs were likely to be motivated to participate in the live blogging (See Table 14).

Table 14: Bivariate Correlations between Attitudes toward Live Blogs and Motivations to Participate in Live Blogging

Subscale	Attitudes toward live blogs
Motivation to participate in live blogging	.112*

Note: Correlations marked with asterisks (*) were significant at $p < .05$

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Innovations in technologies have led the way to new forms of users' engagement with the media and closer relationships between audiences and journalists. In the digital media ecosystem, a multitude of actors participate in content development and dissemination, challenging the traditional understanding of the ways people use media. The immense shift in media ecology, prompted by all-inclusive digital transformation which turned consumers into producers, is pushing scholars to take a fresh look at the field of journalism and rethink the deeply ingrained scientific assumptions of mass communication. Evidently, the power of audiences is growing, causing alterations in journalism practices. In the new media ecosystem, users have an impact on "the role of the journalist as the traditional regulator and moderator of public discourse" (Hermida et al., 2012, p. 816). Hence, diversified activities that audiences are enabled to perform on vibrant digital media platforms, such as participating in content production and providing comments to the stories, create opportunities for a broad spectrum of media uses, but also influence well-established journalistic practices. The newsgathering process is now moving from the streets to the newsrooms. An increasing number of journalists are less frequently at the locations where events happen; they spend more time with their computers, curating news and interacting with readers (Deuze, 2004; Thurman & Walters, 2013).

This complex contemporary media environment was the focus of the current study, which aimed at expanding our understanding about overall changes in the global media landscape by looking at the ways people use the live blog, which has become a widely adopted format by news

websites for delivering live updates about breaking news, scheduled events, sports games, burning issues of the day, and other affairs in society (Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Data from the self-administered survey collected for the study allowed the researcher to explore what makes the live blog a prominent journalism artifact among Internet users. The study findings disclosed the major drivers of live-blog consumption, readers' likelihood to participate in live blogging, and the expectations of digital audience members.

According to the results obtained from the survey, readers embrace live blogs because of their capacity to deliver accounts of events in real time and to provide coverage of social, political, and other occurrences from multiple perspectives. The study findings also stressed the need for rethinking the uses and gratifications approach, thus supporting the argument of several distinguished scholars that new media can provide greater gratification opportunities for audiences than traditional media (Dimmick et al., 2004; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000; Stafford et al., 2004; Sundar & Limperos, 2013). What emerged from the analysis as the main driver of the live-blog consumption was immediacy, which is a contemporary journalism norm native to the online media environment. Immediacy is followed by another recently identified gratification of media use – convenience. Both immediacy and convenience were stronger motivating factors than traditionally employed gratifications that explain media use, such as the opportunity to pass the time, entertainment and social utility. This is a valuable finding as it suggests that the research which aims to investigate the ways people use media in a global, digital media ecosystem should consider employing new variables to explain users' preferences in media use. The study also found that different motivators drive millennials and non-millennials to consume live blogs.

In terms of participation, the users under study did not find this component of live blogging as important as other artifacts, such as immediacy, convenience, and transparency. Specifically, around 80 percent of respondents said they never participated in live blogging by posting comments to live blogs or responding to other people's comments. Additionally, the participatory nature of live blogs was not as important to the respondents as their capacity to provide information in real time or to supply readers with a multitude of media items. This finding further bolsters the arguments of scholars who stressed that even when people were allowed to participate in debates online, they would not necessarily engage in such activities (Hermida & Thurman, 2008; Papacharissi, 2002). Hence, participation appears to be reserved for a small group of citizens, while the majority prefers to engage in "passive consumption" of news stories.

Changing News Media Landscape

Journalism as a profession is going through a major transformation. The challenges journalists face in their workplaces are posed by several factors, among which are new technologies, the market and the public (O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). They are pressed to develop digital skills while simultaneously trying to win the audience's affection, create stories that will bring in advertising revenues and compete with a multitude of actors on the media scene. The focal point of the journalist's daily routine is the reader who is not only a consumer in today's society, but also an empowered actor that can contribute to news websites with newsworthy content or produce and disseminate information through other platforms (Hermida & Thurman, 2008).

News organizations are nowadays under increased pressure to make a profit (O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008) which has implications on journalism practices and the public. In the world of digital communications, where every click counts, a journalist cannot be indifferent toward the users' news consumption preferences. He or she needs to pay close attention to the audience's wants and needs. Understanding readers is critical for the success of news organizations, and the live blog as a journalistic format appears to serve as an example of good practice on how to connect with the audience. As an innovative form of storytelling, the live blog is greatly appreciated by the audiences due to its potential to respond to users' needs that emerged in tandem with new technologies. The live blog has been recognized in the scholarly literature as a transparency-oriented journalistic genre with a strong participatory component, more popular among readers than other news formats on the Internet (Pantic, 2017; Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Based on the findings of the current study, readers cherished all major characteristics of live blogs, but most appealing to them was the capacity of the format to employ multiple sources, provide information in real time and utilize diverse multimedia items. This finding is in line with previous research on live blogs that identified balanced reporting embodied in multitude of opinions and timeliness, which refers to live updates about a running event, as the most cherished characteristics of live blogs (Pantic, 2017; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013).

Multitude of Opinions and Multimedia Elements

According to the study results, the respondents expressed the most positive attitude toward the characteristic of live blogs to utilize multiple viewpoints in a single story. The capacity of the live blog to supply readers with a wide diversity of sources, both anonymous and trusted, has been

recognized in the previous studies on live blogs as one of the distinctive characteristics of the format (O'Mahony, 2014; Pantic, 2017; Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). As an illustration, Pantic et al. (2017) found that live blogs that covered conflict-related events published by *The Guardian* employed on average about 57 sources, while live blogs on politics utilized on average 43.5 and economics 40 sources. This variety of content-providers clearly sets the live blog apart from the traditional news formats, such as the inverted pyramid. Specifically, the structure of the inverted pyramid sets a limit to the number of sources which can be employed in a single story.

Unlike legacy media that face space and time limits, the live blog operates on a platform that has the capacity to allow for long-form reporting. The Internet in general enables journalists to use a multitude of sources (O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). Media professionals who live-blog about events take advantage of the space they have on the news websites by including in their stories opinions and facts that come from individuals and organizations of different backgrounds. As the study results imply, this is where practices employed in live blogs and the audience's expectations perfectly match. News consumers expect of journalists to utilize the potential they have on the news websites and provide reports that are balanced, explaining events from diverse viewpoints.

In the online media ecology, there are many possibilities for readers to stay informed (Peters & Witschge, 2015). They can access their daily dose of information not only through news websites, but also by reading stories on web-blogs, anonymous websites, social media, wiki-pages, and other digital platforms. However, what distinguishes a live blog published on a news website from the aforementioned sources is that the authority of a journalist stands behind the information

published in the live blog. This is critical, because people believe that journalists provide trustworthy explanations of events, so they turn to journalism sources to get credible information (Hayes et al., 2007). Supplying a wide auditorium with verified accounts of events is what differentiate professional from amateur and other forms of journalism on the Internet. The live blog comes with a credibility "stamp" of the news organization under which umbrella the story has been produced. Citizens in democratic societies need to receive credible information from the media to be free (Hayes et al., 2007).

Among the regular activities in producing live blogs is employing diverse multimedia items to deliver news. Telling a story through the multitude of news elements was on the top of the list of most preferred features of live blogs, along with utilization of multiple sources and delivering real-time information. What is common to these features is that they genuinely illuminate diverse capacities of digital media, changing journalism practices and how users feel about these changes. Specifically, new technologies allow journalists to present a multi-layered story that incorporates an abundance of multimedia items. Live bloggers take advantage of this opportunity by combining written words with hyperlinks, graphic animations, videos, embedded tweets, Facebook posts, videos, audio files, and many other news items to tell a story (Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). As an illustration, Pantic et al. (2017) found, on average, about nine photographs and three videos in a single live blog published on *The Guardian* website. Having a capacity to incorporate a multitude of multimedia elements was critical to the participants of this study, as they expressed a positive attitude toward the characteristic of live blogs "to provide various multimedia file formats such as videos, photographs, graphics, and audio files." Such finding suggests that readers embrace multimedia storytelling because it delivers at one place traditional

forms of storytelling such as text, audio, and video, with new forms native to the digital media (e.g., social media posts, live videos, interactive graphics). Live blogs supply readers with both textual and visual component of reporting, allowing them to select the form of storytelling they are most comfortable with.

Both pluralism of sources and multitude of multimedia files that were recognized by the respondents as critically important characteristics of live blogs, demonstrate the advantages of digital media in comparison to traditional media forms of storytelling. An article in the print media is definite; a journalist has a limited space in the newspaper for his or her story. Similarly, TV and radio journalists have a limited time on the air to report the news. On the other hand, live blogs do not face such boundaries. They blend long-established forms of reporting, such as delivering accounts from sources that are credible information suppliers for the event in question, with contemporary forms of storytelling, through the live video streaming applications or interactive graphics, running for up to 24 hours (Thurman & Walters, 2013).

The readers, who were the focal point of the current study, do not just embrace multimedia elements in news reports; they also create newsworthy material from which news organizations can greatly benefit. The news happens everywhere, but media organizations are not equipped with sufficient resources to cover every single location of the events such as natural disasters, humanitarian interventions, or protests. Hence, they utilize the potential of readers "armed" with smartphones and other gadgets that enable them to capture important moments and share them on social media. As an illustration, the users' contributions in the form of video sequences, emails, and photographs helped news organizations in Great Britain to provide comprehensive coverage of the terrorist attack in London in July 2005, which has frequently been named as one of the

events that paved the way to readers' engagement in storytelling online (Hermida & Thurman, 2008).

Immediacy and Transparency

Immediacy manifested as one of the major requisites of live blogs. As the respondents' attitudes toward the live-blog characteristic to deliver accounts of events in real time suggest, being continuously updated with the most recent information about developments in the society is critical for digital media users. This significant finding of the study is in congruence with previous research on live blogs which detected immediacy or timeliness as the most cherished features among readers that keeps them engaged and interested in the event coverage (McEnnis, 2016; Pantic, 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Furthermore, this study findings emphasized the importance of immediacy in consuming live blogs as this norm emerged as the key predictor of likelihood to read live blogs. Immediacy is a critical feature of the format not only from the perspective of users, but also from the perspective of live-blog creators. Journalists believe they need to provide updates about events "within the space of minutes, otherwise the audience would lose interest" (McEnnis, 2016, p. 974).

In the current study, immediacy was operationalized as the live blog's characteristic to provide information in real time and to supply readers with constant updates about an event. As the findings suggest, this norm was the strongest motivator for live-blog use and the only significant predictor of readers' likelihood to read live-blogs. Hence, its prominence in the new media ecosystem is indisputable. News organizations operate online in a different rhythm than in the traditional media environment, producing and distributing stories while the events are running. This accelerated news production process in the changing media landscape raises expectations of

readers to obtain information at high speed. The problem, however, is that when journalists work at high speed, they are more likely to make mistakes (Karlsson et al., 2016; O'Mahony, 2014). Hence, supplying audiences with bites of information about key societal developments might pose certain challenges to the professional norms. Among the major threats to journalists in a process of delivering live reports about events are difficulties in achieving accuracy at all times and a looser culture of corroboration in comparison to the traditional model of journalism based on the expectations that all facts had been verified before the story was published (Hermida, 2015; O'Mahony, 2014; Thurman & Schapals, 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Above all, immediacy means that "different provisory, incomplete and sometimes dubious news drafts are published" (Karlsson, 2011, p. 279).

The finding that immediacy emerged as the critical norm for a digital media users further implies complexity of the digital media ecosystem that was discussed in Chapter Two. When journalists work at a high speed, they are likely to make errors, and when errors in news reports become visible, there is a likelihood that users would begin perceiving the news organization and the journalist who published the report as non-credible. Such issues can easily defeat the effort that the journalist has invested to disseminate the story in a timely manner. Additionally, credible information that news organizations are expected to continuously provide is critical for trust-building between audiences and journalists (Hayes et al., 2007). Further implications in terms of lack of credibility of sources and information might include a likelihood of audiences to turn to other sources that they perceive as trustworthy.

There is, however, an alternative, more optimistic explanation of the ways immediacy manifests online. As Karlsson (2016) pointed out, "online journalism is rapid and inaccurate from

time to time, but the liquid character also allows for the correction of errors and informing the users about doing so" (p. 2). Furthermore, in the networked media ecology, digital technologies enable journalists to point out directly at the sources of their information, to reveal the process of information gathering and obtain users' reactions to the stories they produce (Hayes et al., 2007; Karlsson, 2010). This unique process makes journalists' daily routines transparent to a wide auditorium.

Immediacy was discussed in the literature review in tandem with transparency. Transparent storytelling is a strategy that digital journalists employ to openly address errors in their stories and, thus, avoid deceiving the audience with false information. Transparency is important in journalism as it does not only enable digital media platforms to emphasize errors, but it also puts pressure on media professionals to be cautious about selecting sources and information for the stories they publish. While traditional media wrap-up a report and perform fact-checking prior to printing or airing the story, online news media allow the fluidity of facts and a discourse that encourages user participation; hence, what is evident about this process that occurs online is that it relies more on transparent truth-telling that engages readers in news production than on journalistic scrutiny (Karlsson, 2011, p. 283). The study findings further confirm the importance of transparency in the digital media ecosystem, as this norm was embraced by the respondents under study. Specifically, transparency emerged as one of the motivators for live-blog consumption, even though not as strong as immediacy. Furthermore, this requisite of digital journalism was recognized as important among young adults or millennials, who would seek live blogs because of the urge to acquire information that is transparently presented to them. This further stresses the importance of

understanding the audiences, their preferences in media use, and how journalism accommodates the users' choice.

Transparency has become a distinguished norm of digital journalism (Singer, 2015) and as such, it has a prominent place in the live blog (Pantic et al., 2017). As exploratory studies on this journalism artifact suggest, live bloggers openly show how they obtain information about events by providing links to diverse sources they employ (Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Posting links to sources contributes to the notion of story's credibility, as journalists transparently direct readers to data, statements and other accounts of events, so the readers can judge themselves how accurate and trustworthy the information is (Hayes et al., 2007). Transparency can help news organizations build trust with their audiences (Hayes et al., 2007; Karlsson, 2010).

In a media culture where people are motivated to consume certain types of stories because they are being delivered in real time, journalists are pressed to win the peoples' affection by meeting their expectations, while simultaneously trying to preserve the norms their profession was built upon. An evidence of this struggle could be found in the study about journalism role perception in the new media environment that revealed that there are just slightly more journalists who believe that accuracy has primacy over speed than journalists who hold the opposite stance (O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). Hence, even those who produce news are not quite confident what is more important in terms of reporting – to ensure that every information is correct before its publication or to outsmart competition and deliver news fast even if the accuracy of the news is not entirely warranted. As the journalism field is rapidly changing, journalists will need to find the right balance between gaining the sympathy of the audiences and being perceived as a credible source of information. Readers are aware that errors can happen when journalists work at high

speed. They are willing to forgive journalists for the mistake they make; however, the readers are ready to disregard only the mistakes that are not large and the mistakes that journalists openly address in the stories (Karlsson et al., 2016).

Online News Consumer Culture

This study found that the frequency of reading online news was positively related to the frequency of reading live blogs and the likelihood of reading live blogs. The finding can be interpreted in two ways. First, it shows that the live blog is becoming a recognized format among readers who regularly consume news on web pages. As an illustration, after being asked about what motivates him/her to read live blogs, one respondent said: "I do not seek out live blogs but rather happen upon them."

The shift from the traditional to the digital media environment exposed readers to diverse formats of storytelling, including but not limited to picture galleries, chat-rooms, digital videos, message boards, and live blogs. Their interest in getting updates about important events the same day these events happen increases the chances of reading live blogs. The live blog has been used as a news format regularly by the mainstream media organizations, such as the BBC, *The Guardian,* The CNN, *The New York Times,* and many other, for delivering live reports on events (O'Mahony, 2014; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Hence, readers who are likely to consume the content on these websites are also likely to encounter live blogs.

Second, the relationship between the frequency of reading online news and frequency of reading live blogs indicates that there are certain media consumption habits that are common to digital media users. Karlsson (2011), for instance, identified participation and immediacy as two important characteristics of online news. In line with this logic, those who consume news on

websites have certain expectations of the presentation of news on the Internet. In other words, those who are accustomed to online news consumption will also read live blogs as they resemble major features of online news, such as immediacy and participation reflected in user-generated content and readers' comments. These online news readers obtain information in the new media environment which allows audiences to express themselves in various ways, by creating stories, circulating content on the web or just passively consuming information. Evidently, there is a culture developed on the Internet that embraces digital storytelling which combines the media art such as videos, still images, sound and text with social media networking. Including the audience in the production process and transparent presentation of information is intrinsic to digital media as this process paves the way to building trust and mutual respect between those who produce stories and those who consume them (Hayes et al., 2007; Karlsson, 2011). This online media culture understands how journalism works on the Internet and in that respect, it is likely to accept certain flaws that follow the immediate delivery of information and utilization of sources that are not credible by default. As Karlsson (2016) pointed out, people who use digital media to consume news could be "more familiar, and thus more tolerant, with issues of speed, inaccuracy, and correction in online news" (p. 6).

Characteristics and Habits of Live-Blog Users

In terms of demographics, the current study found that females were more likely to read live blogs than males, while the level of education did not play a significant role in the respondents' likelihood to read live blogs. However, the effect size in terms of differences between females and males in their likelihood to read live blogs was small, indicating that the magnitude of the difference was not large. Further research is needed to investigate the difference in the likelihood

to read live blogs based on sex. With respect to the devices readers use, the study found that those respondents who access live blogs on their smartphones and laptops were more likely to consume live blogs than the respondent who use other devices. This indicates that users enjoy consuming live blogs "on the go," on the devices they can carry with themselves. Interestingly, a tablet computer, which is another portable device, was at the neutral point, indicating that readers, on average, were neither likely nor unlikely to use tablets to read live blogs. A potential explanation could be that tablets are not as widely used devices as smartphones.

Expectedly, the analysis showed that those who nurtured positive attitudes toward live blogs were also motivated to participate in live blogging. This is in line with the studies that suggested that attitudes can explain why people use media (e.g., Kaye & Johnson, 2002). With respect to social media use, readers who share news on these platforms were more likely to read live blogs. This is an important finding, considering that the live blog is a format that is strongly connected to social media and feeds on their content (Hermida, 2012; Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Hence, the consumers of this format are readers who engage in various activities on social media. Interestingly, no differences were found between those who share news on different social media platforms even though Twitter has frequently been identified as the commonly used source of information for live bloggers (O'Mahony, 2014; Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Twitter can still serve as a source for live blogs, but readers are almost equally likely to engage in sharing news on Twitter as they are on Facebook.

Gratifications of Live Blogs

One of the study's main assumptions was that online journalistic genres, such as live blogs, can meet a broader range of needs than traditional media. This assumption was congruent with the position advocated by several distinguished contributors to the uses and gratification perspective, who argued that the key concepts of the approach should be reevaluated in pursuit of better understanding of media uses and gratifications in the digital age. In line with this logic, scholars who study audiences need to take into consideration new gratifications that emerged with the introduction of digital technologies (Dimmick et al., 2004; Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Ruggiero, 2000; Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

The current study embraced this approach with an aim to contribute to further understanding of the ways people use media in the 21st century. Hence, both traditional and contemporary motivations for media use have been investigated to ascertain what gratifications are users most likely to seek in live blogs. In line with this position, several traditional motivations were employed, including: information seeking/surveillance, entertainment, social utility, and "killing time." To explore potential new gratifications audiences seek in live blog consumption, the following variables were employed: transparency, participation, convenience, and immediacy. As the study results signal, utilizing a methodology that combined two sets of motivations was a justifiable research path that contributed to a general understanding of the motivations for consuming live blogs. Specifically, two contemporary gratifications - immediacy and convenience - had the highest mean score on the list of gratifications users seek in live blogs. These gratifications were followed by one traditional motivation for media use - information seeking. Such findings indicate that both traditional and contemporary motivations explain why users

consume live blogs. Furthermore, they suggest that scholars who study the uses of digital media and fail to acknowledge concepts that emerged with digital technologies, will not be able to provide results that genuinely reflect users' preferences in the Information Age.

Immediacy, which has already been discussed in this chapter, signals that there is an increasing need among audiences to acquire live reports about major events. This motivator for the live-blog use is followed by convenience, another requisite of the digital media ecosystem. Convenience implies that readers use live blogs because they can access them at anytime and anywhere. New technologies have enabled people to use various devices to read live blogs – from desktop computers to smartphones. Hence, it is critical for a digital news reader not to be tied to a specific location or a place to learn from the media about events. Users can read live reports about major occurrences in the society on their phones and tablets while commuting to school or work. The live blog also enables them to read real-time updates about a tennis match in Melbourne, war intervention in Syria or a winter storm in North America.

Old Gratifications in New Media Environment

The analysis also showed that the typology of human needs identified in the 1970s by Katz and fellow scholars stood the test of time. Looking into live blogs, the most prominent motivators among widely-employed variables for investigating why people use media and look for specific content is information seeking/surveillance. Along with a message interpretation and social transmission or communicating values from one generation to another, the surveillance of the environment was previously identified by Lasswell (1948) as one of the main functions of communication. People seek information because of their need to feel secure, but also because they are curious and want to learn about the world around them (Katz et al., 1973b; Palmgreen et

al., 1980; Ruggiero, 2000; Shao, 2009). The live blogs are teeming with opportunities for obtaining information, as they cover a vast array of issues. Journalists live-blog on the news websites about politics, social issues, economics, conflicts, show business, sports, etc. (Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). Thus, aside from delivering news in real time and allowing readers to access stories at any location, the live blogs provide an abundance of information that enables readers to learn about diverse types of events in all parts of the world. Reading live blogs to seek information or observe the world is in congruence with the perceived role of journalists in democratic societies. As media professionals, the journalists are expected to inform the public about important issues and be a watchdog of those in power (Peters & Witschge, 2015).

Information seeking as a motivation for consuming live blogs was followed by two other motivations that have been employed both in the pre-digital and the digital era literature on media consumption habits: entertainment and pass time. The needs to entertain oneself and kill time have been identified in the literature as the needs based on social and psychological characteristics of people (Katz et al., 1973a; Katz et al, 1973b). Both variables scored slightly above the neutral line, indicating that they are not major drivers of the live-blog use, but that the people still perceive them as motivations for consuming live reports online. For instance, people can entertain themselves while reading live blogs about the Academy Awards ceremony or the Super Bowl. They can also occupy their time by reading live updates about political debates or a soccer game.

Aside from surveillance, entertainment, and passing the time, social utility has also been a frequently employed variable for investigating gratifications user seek and obtain from both traditional and new media. Social utility explains the social component of media use and it was operationalized in this study as reading live blogs to “have something to talk about with others”

and "to get ammunition in arguments with others." The analysis utilized in this study showed that seeking live blogs for social utility was not a strong motivating factor of live-blog consumption.

Millennials Praise Social Utility, Non-millennials Embrace Immediacy

The study found significant differences between millennials and non-millennials in motivations for using live blogs. This is congruent with previous studies on media uses across cohort groups that found differences between millennials, baby boomers, and Generation X in media habits (Moore, 2012; Valentine, 2013). As the findings suggest, millennials read live blogs to obtain information presented transparently, to pass the time, entertain themselves, and to acquire information for conversation with other people. These four variables were not motivating factors for non-millennials to obtain information from live blogs. On the other hand, non-millennials were more driven to read live blogs to obtain live updates about events than millennials. This is an interesting finding, suggesting that non-millennials recognized immediacy as an important phenomenon of journalism that they were introduced to later in life. As they have interacted with the media both in pre-digital and digital era, they are able to understand the advantages of new media that supply readers with constant updates about events as they happen. Immediacy was also embraced by the millennials, but the difference is that this gratification that users seek in live blogs was more powerful among non-millennials.

This finding, however, does not imply that non-millennials praise all new gratifications more than millennials. For instance, participation as a motivator for consuming live blogs was stronger for millennials. The average scores for both groups were negative, implying that participation does not motivate neither millennials nor non-millennials to participate in live blogging. However, the difference between the two groups in terms of participation was

statistically significant. As the analysis showed, the mean score for the millennials was near the neutral point, while non-millennials had much lower scores, indicating that they would not be driven to open a live blog because they want to discuss events publicly, by posting comments on the news websites and social media accounts of news organizations. One non-millennial, for instance, expressed concerns about sharing personal information and viewpoints online: "I never comment on anything in blogs or social media. I don't like circulating my name. I don't necessarily advertise my ideology/political orientation. I'm not ashamed of it--but I don't advertise it, either."

Thinking further about differences between the millennials and non-millennials, it appears that the respondents who were the age of 18 to 34 were more likely to embrace the social component of live blogs than non-millennials, as they had a higher average score not only for participation, but also for social utility as a motivator for reading live coverage of events online. Millennials were more likely to obtain information from live blogs "to have something to talk about with others" and "to get ammunition in arguments with others." On the other hand, looking for live blogs to get information for conversations with family or friends (Ruggerio, 2000) was not a motivator for non-millennials.

An additional value of the finding that different motivators drive millennial and non-millennial users to live blogs is that it addresses the complexity of the new media environment. If one takes a look at the convergent newsrooms that produce content for different types of media, they may encounter the clash of cultures between journalists who are eager, and those who are reluctant to adopt new technologies and produce distinct media products that embrace several forms of storytelling. While some journalists see the advantage in digital tools to increase the quality of their work, others still struggle to incorporate new practices in their well-established

routines (Deuze, 2004). Similar differences are present among the audience members. There are users who are multitaskers as they engage simultaneously in browsing the web and watching television or listening to the radio (Deuze, 2004). They have embraced new technologies as oppose to the users who either lack skills or willingness to engage with the digital media. Hence, the clash of culture is not only an issue in the newsrooms, among media professionals, but it also exists among audiences, making the digital media environment even more complex.

Breaking News

The qualitative responses that readers provided to the open-ended question which asked them about other motivations for consuming live blogs indicated that readers like this format because it allows them to obtain instant information about breaking news. As one user stated: "I like them for breaking news and major news events. I don't use them for routine, everyday news." Another respondent said: "I only really use live blogs when a huge event is/was occurring, things like national/international tragedies or high-stakes political events like the 2016 presidential race, the inauguration, etc." This is an important finding, as it further shows that news consumers recognize the live blog as a journalistic format for delivering this type of news.

The live blog is a core journalistic product of online media that attracts a high volume of visitors. Previous research identified the live blog as the default format for breaking news, making it suitable for covering terrorist attacks, major political events, humanitarian crisis, natural disasters, and other sudden events (O'Mahony, 2014; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). One of the major advantages of the format especially in terms of covering breaking news, is that journalists can post an initial information about an event as soon as it happens

(Phillips, 2015) and add new updates in the form of embedded tweets, photographs, videos, text, and hyperlinks when they get new information about the event.

Participation in Live Blogging

As some of the distinctive features of live blogs are reflected in their informal tone, participatory nature, and high reliance on user-generated content, one of the key aspects of the current study was to examine readers' participation in live blogging. To provide a thorough analysis that will result in in-depth understanding about citizens' participation in new forms of storytelling on the Internet, this component of reader engagement was assessed threefold. First, the respondents were asked to express their attitudes toward the live-blog's characteristic to encourage readers' participation. Second, participation was listed as one of the potential motivations for the live-blog consumption. Finally, the study investigated readers' participation in live blogs by asking them about the frequency of posting comments on live blogs and responding to other people's comments. Interestingly, the aforementioned components of participation assessed in the analysis had low scores, indicating that the tendency of the live blogs to illuminate participatory journalism did not seem to be appealing to the majority of respondents under study.

Looking at the analysis about readers' attitudes toward live blogs, the respondents rated participation positively, indicating that they like this feature of live blogs. However, among all the characteristics of live blogs listed on a scale that assessed readers' attitudes, participation had the lowest mean score. Specifically, the respondents felt close to neutral toward the live blog feature to "encourage readers to participate in a live-blog creation." This can be explained with the prior-mentioned argument that readers need credible information and that they expect of journalists to

deliver it (Hayes et al., 2007). Hence, they might not feel confident enough in the information that is being provided by anonymous sources, such as citizen journalists, even if that information is incorporated in a story produced by the media professional.

Similarly, the respondents did not perceive participation as a factor that would motivate them to read live blogs. The average score on the list of potential motivations for using live blogs was the lowest for participation. Moreover, participation was the only variable on the list of motivations that had the average score below the "neutral" point, indicating that having an opportunity to share information about events with live bloggers or post comments on live blogs was not a motivating factor for readers to engage in live blogging.

The study also investigated if the respondents differ in their motivation to read live blogs based on a type of live blog they read most often. Statistically significant differences were found between three groups of respondents: those who read live blogs about entertainment, politics, and social issues. While readers who engage in live blogs about entertainment were likely to read live blogs because they wanted to participate in them, the respondents who engage in live blogs on politics and social issues did not agree that participation would drive them toward live blogs.

Examining participation was critical for the current study as allowing audiences to contribute with their content to the news websites can result in their engagement in public issues (Nip, 2006). Additionally, participation is perceived as a practice that is likely to change journalism norms (Hujanen, 2016), which was discussed thoroughly in Chapter Two of this study. In the digital media ecosystem, users' participation "is part of media professionals' every day work – whether they like it or not" (Banks & Deuze, 2009, p. 422). Because of this development, the new environment presses journalists to abandon individualistic work and collaborate with other

professionals, stakeholders, and the public in content production (Deuze, 2004). This networked production of content is evident in live blogs, as one of the distinctive features of the format is that it provides room for readers to join the conversation, give their own accounts of events through delivering still images, written words, and videos from the scene to news media professionals, or simply by posting comments to a story as their reaction to what is going on.

However, as this study suggests, the wide capacity of live blogs to accommodate participation is not itself a sufficient motivator for users to take advantage of this opportunity and voice their opinions about a variety of issues in the society. In other words, providing space for participation does not necessarily imply that people are willing to participate. This conclusion is in congruence with the arguments raised by scholars who have employed the public sphere perspective to explain boundaries that affect citizens' participation in the online discussions. The public sphere refers to a space in which people are equally entitled to participate in opinion exchange (Habermas, 1989) and that "allows citizens to inform themselves about societal developments" (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2010, p. 144). The public sphere is "tied to democratic ideals that call for citizen participation in public affairs" (Papacharissi, 2002, p. 10). One of the key issues that scholars who have investigated participation online from the public sphere perspective addressed was that the extent to which a certain platform can serve as a space for constructive discourse does not depend solely on the platform itself, but also leans on the citizens' readiness to engage in the discourse (Papacharissi, 2002). The results of the current study further bolster this argument.

Mass media in general, especially television and radio, are fragmented; they are limited in space and they present topics and arguments selectively (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2010). Hence, there

is not much room for ordinary people to share their viewpoints of different issues. Digital media have raised some optimism in that respect, as they provide room for participatory journalism which gives users "the chance to express their views about public affairs" (Nip, 2006, p. 217). Hujanen (2016) argues that citizens' debates are important as "they bring people's voices into the public sphere, and strengthen freedom of expression," but they "cannot proceed without journalistic control" considering that "journalists' ethical code of practice is represented as a requirement for debate" (p. 875).

As a digital media format, the live blog appears to have a strong democratic potential because it is "more collaborative, distributed, fluid and less author-centric than other forms of journalism" (Hermida, 2012, p. 664). By employing a large amount of user-generated content, live blogs put high value on news consumers' opinions and accounts of events. They combine traditional storytelling with curation, deriving information from secondary sources and providing a great number of links that take readers to the sources (Thurman & Walters, 2013). However, the results of the current study imply that even when a format such as the live blog serves as a forum where different viewpoints collide or coincide, only a small number of readers will demonstrate their readiness to participate in live blogging. Based on the analysis, the readers who participate in live blogging are those who frequently read this format. Others are more likely to limit their engagement to the passive consumption of information presented in the live blog. This is not surprising, as according to other studies about audience engagement in storytelling, the majority of users would still rather consume media than participate in content creation (Hermida & Thurman, 2008).

This is in line with the previous studies about the public sphere on the Internet that encountered several limitations with respect to participation. Papacharissi (2002), for instance, addressed that one of the factors that affects participation in debates online is the Internet access. The extent to which diverse social categories might have access to participatory digital media spaces could differ (Peters & Witschge, 2015). This is problematic, as it can make even conversations in open forums biased, considering that not everyone is able to participate in them. Such arguments can help explain participation boundaries in the live blogging phenomenon, as the consumption of the format requires access to the Internet. In addition, the fact that not everyone is willing to participate in discussions online even when they have access to this platform, contributes to biased debates, as not everybody shares their points of view on a topic. The findings of this study are in line with this skepticism about people's participation and with the results of the studies that analyzed the UK-based news media to find that a percentage of readers who would participate in the news creation by providing content or feedback was very low. As an illustration, only 1% to 5% of the consumers of news stories on *The Guardian* website would contribute to the news media content (Hermida & Thurman, 2008). Another example is the BBC website, which has a section "Have Your Say," where users' provide feedback and suggestions on topics that journalists propose. This type of readers' contributions to the BBC comes from only .05% of the news websites' daily unique readers (Thurman, 2008).

Even though citizens increasingly participate in content production online (Banks & Deuze, 2009), overall participation, as this study findings confirm, is far from ideal. Still, participation should not be perceived as non-significant. This study's respondents expressed the most positive attitude toward the live blog feature to incorporate multiple sources. These sources

also reflect the participatory nature of the live blogs. Moreover, there are news consumers who enjoy seeing what other people post below live blogs, but are not personally interested in writing comments themselves. One millennial, for instance, stated that he likes "to read the comments section to see others opinions."

The conclusion that can be driven from the current study and early research on live blogs is that two major factors pose boundaries to participation: professional and personal. First, participation on news websites and their social media accounts is mediated by media professionals. As Peters and Witschge (2015) noticed, "participatory tools are employed in a selective fashion, and journalism is a long way from allowing audiences to share information jointly, co-monitor those in power, represent themselves in public affairs, and get into contact with political actors directly" (p. 28). Therefore, not only readers' content that appears in news stories, but also the comments to stories readers post undergo professional scrutiny before publication (Thurman, 2008). That could discourage users from participating in live blogging and push them to turn to other platforms instead, such as Facebook and Twitter. Second, participation in storytelling depends on readers' personal willingness to engage in discussions and provide information that is newsworthy. The results of this study show that the small group that is ready to participate in live blogging is comprised of the people who frequently read news presented in this format and those who nurture positive attitudes toward live reports on news websites. That could also imply that live blogs, with their capacity to accommodate multiple sources, trigger readers to take the role of content suppliers and engage in discussions with their personal accounts of events and opinions translated into the comments.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Online media is developing rapidly, resulting in shifts in journalism practices and audience's consumption patterns. As a distinct digital media product, the live blog has contributed tremendously to these changes, turning communication between media and audiences from a one-way to a two-way process. With its advanced digital features, the live blog captivates readers, supplying them with continuous news coverage through both textual and visual elements. Aside from news consumers, this format for delivering live updates about events in real time has also attracted attention of journalism scholars, who put effort in explaining how the live blog developed and why it is appealing to Internet users.

Building upon existing literature, this dissertation contributed to the growing knowledge on the live blogging phenomenon by investigating readers' participation in live blogging and the motivating factors behind live-blog consumption. The study examined the live blogging phenomenon from the perspectives of both the profession and theory. First, it further bolstered the findings of earlier studies that readers cherish live blogs for their capacity to provide rolling coverage of an event by employing a multitude of sources and multimedia elements (Pantic, 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). According to the findings, digital media consumers recognize the live blog as a format designed for delivering breaking news and real-time updates on important events online. Determining what drives people to specific formats and content online can help media organizations build successful news sites. Second, the current study contributed to knowledge on uses and gratifications by providing evidence that this perspective needs to be reevaluated in the

Information Age, as media that emerged with new technologies provide a broader set of gratifications than traditional media. Future studies should consider employing even a wider set of variables, to provide better understanding about the reasons people consume certain media formats online.

Looking from a wider perspective, this dissertation stresses the need to employ a new paradigm in studying journalism to explain the ongoing changes in the media industry that affect both content producers and consumers. It placed the live blog in the context of the contemporary media ecosystem, where journalism operates under altered and contested principles. This ecosystem, as the new paradigm suggests, is not sending journalism to history; rather, it pushes us scholars to distance from the orthodox ways we perceived professional rituals that occur in the news organizations and look at the world of mass media through the new lens.

Limitations

Two major limitations of the study need to be addressed. First, there are boundaries posed by the method itself. Even though self-reports are suitable for investigating people's attitudes and their media use, they do not necessarily reflect genuine opinions of respondents. Surveys do not "measure social action; they can only collect self-reports of recalled past action or of prospective or hypothetical action" (Babbie, 2007, p. 303-304). Therefore, people who self-report attitudes might be triggered to provide answers that are desirable (Karlsson et al., 2016), not those that truly reflect their viewpoints. Another weakness of the survey research is lack of flexibility. Once the questionnaire has been distributed, the process could not be undone. The researcher was not able to change the original design and add new items to assess potential new variables that have emerged during data collection (Babbie, 2007).

Second, the sampling method used for the study was not random, so the findings cannot be generalizable to the entire population. Specifically, this study employed a volunteer sample and utilized a web survey, which can be treated as biased, because it collects responses from the Internet users only (Thayer-Hart et al., 2010). That should not, however, be considered as a major disadvantage of this particular study, because its primary focus was to collect feedback from online news consumers. The majority of respondents were students who were suitable as a sample for the study as they are millennials, so they belong to a category of people who have grown up using digital technologies. Thus, they are one of the targets in exploring news consumption patterns in the digital age as they present a generation that uses new technologies regularly. The issue with the utilized procedure is that the invitation to complete a survey did not reach certain population members, such as those who are avid live-blog consumers. Still, even with the sample limitations, the study is valuable as it supplies the literature with theoretical knowledge which is important because of its predictive power (Shapiro, 2002).

Directions for Future Research

The results of the study show that we live in an era of instant consumption of news stories where people are urged to obtain information on their portable devices while the events are running. Being a major driver of the live-blog consumption, immediacy emerges as a high-impact norm in a contemporary media ecology. The importance of immediacy contributes to the notion that "for a growing number of news consumers, there is an appetite for live news pages" (Thurman & Schapals, 2017, p. 283). Immediacy breaks out as the major demand of digital media users, thus affecting how journalists perform their daily routines. When journalists report information in real-time, combining professional sources with insights from social media, they face "tension between

publication and verification" (Hermida, 2013, p. 303). Future studies should utilize interviews and surveys to investigate how journalists balance the requirement to report news quickly and to be accurate in reporting.

Building upon the assumption that online news consumers are accustomed to digital journalism practices, it would be valuable to investigate their threshold of tolerance for errors in live blogs. The relationships between audiences and journalists has changed as digital technologies have allowed them to connect more closely (O'Sullivan & Heinonen, 2008). With its informal tone and participatory nature (Thurman & Walters, 2013), live blogs have developed the capacity to connect to readers. Scholars should determine if this relationship-building component of the live blogs along with their function to deliver updates about events as they unfold, compensate for occasional errors.

The characteristic of live blogs to provide diverse opinions was highly rated among the respondents, indicating that they expect digital journalists to utilize the potential of the wide-open space on the Internet and supply them with different viewpoints. As indicated in the study, live blogs provide an abundance of sources which they signpost transparently (O'Mahony, 2014; Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Walters, 2013). What is yet to be investigated is the real balance of different opinions in live blogs across news organizations and countries as well as the extent to which live bloggers allow low-profile sources to be incorporated in their stories.

Another consideration for future research is to further examine how journalists address the differences in consumption of live blogs and other digital media formats among audience members. This study showed that millennials and non-millennials have different motivations to read live blogs. Having a divided audience is challenging for a smooth operation of the newsrooms

as it is to have journalists with different perceptions of how the work should be done. What leaves no doubt about the digital media environment is that new technologies are becoming an integral part of life of both media professionals and news consumers. Those who are reluctant to develop digital skills will suffer the consequences of being left behind in the process of innovation.

Among the crucial issues that should be examined in the future in terms of live blog production is the autonomy of those who create live blogs. Based on the exploratory study about live blogs conducted by Thurman and Walters (2013), live bloggers seem to be independent in making decisions regarding sources they employ in their stories. Other studies have also shown that digital journalists in general have more autonomy in comparison with their traditional media counterparts due to specific characteristics of the environment they work in, which demands immediacy in delivering news and networking in the news production process (e.g., Steensen, 2009). Still, some studies showed that commercial interests come into play (McEnnis, 2016), affecting how journalists live-blog about events. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of marketing forces, audiences, political elites and other stakeholders on the live blogging process.

The last, but not least important point, is participation in live blogging, which calls for caution because of certain limitations that both the media and consumers face. First, to provide credible information to a wider population and preserve professional standards, journalists need to carefully select sources and accounts of events they publish. In doing so, they are likely to press the red button for information that lacks verifiability and choose only insights that come from well-known sources on the Internet. Such practice limits the live-blog capacity to enable all-inclusive participation. However, this caution in sorting out information is critical for live bloggers to

provide accounts of events that are trustworthy. As previously addressed in the study, credibility is one of the focal points of democratic societies, because it enables citizens to judge events (Hermida, 2015).

Second, openness to participation does not necessarily indicate that the scope of contributions will be wide. The results of the current study show that the participatory component of live blogs is less important than the readers' urge to obtain news in real time at any location. Furthermore, the enthusiasm to supply a wide population with personal accounts of events and viewpoints about societal, political, economic, and other issues, is not widespread among consumers. Rather, the readiness to participate in storytelling by providing information about occurrences in society or feedback to stories is limited to those who are interested to embrace the role of a reader that exceeds passive consumption of news.

Participation, as a requisite of democracy, has occupied the attention of scholars who study emerging media. Several studies have shown that readers participate in content creation online in initial stages and to a certain extent, as their contributions are being carefully selected and edited by media professionals (Jönsson & Örnebring, 2011; Scott, Millard, & Leonard, 2014; Thurman, 2008). Future studies should employ interviews with live bloggers and observational methods to examine the characteristics and the scope of readers' participation when journalists are providing a coverage of an event in real time.

Furthermore, this study slightly touched upon participation in live blogs from the public sphere perspective to increase understanding about potential reasons for limited participation. As this dissertation focused solely on audiences and did not investigate the content of live blogs, it would be valuable for future research to examine to what extent the live blog serves as a platform

for debate to its consumers. Such investigation would be enabled by looking into the main requirements of the public sphere, such as exchange of ideas and opinions that are based on valid information, critical examination of one's own values when confronted with strong opposite arguments, equality in raising arguments, and openness in providing all the necessary information in the dialog (Dahlberg, 2001).

Future studies should also explore the differences between users' readiness to participate on the independent Internet platforms and those that are mediated by news organizations. Readers might feel comfortable participating solely on the platforms such as social media, that enable them to directly publish their posts, without moderation. Bypassing the media and producing the material themselves (Nanabhay & Farmanfarmaian, 2011) could give them a sense of freedom in expressing their viewpoints. For instance, Banks and Deuze (2009) addressed that users' overall engagement in the creation and distribution of media content online can be perceived as a form of labor that is under control of companies and organizations. The readers could be reluctant to engage in providing content to the news organizations as they do not see the benefits of volunteering for those organizations. Additional research may be necessary to investigate this assumption.

As the study results suggest, there is a long way to the full utilization of the democratic potential of live blogs. On the optimistic side, the format provides space for exchange of ideas considering that it allows many voices to be heard by deriving a large amount of information from different sources, including both high-profile individuals and ordinary citizens who share their accounts of events on social media and other platforms (O'Mahony, 2014; Pantic et al., 2017; Thurman & Newman, 2014; Thurman & Walters, 2013). This is a huge advantage of live blogs,

considering that communication itself is better "when multiple actors, plural evaluation and plural arguments are included" (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2010, p. 147). However, it is also critical for a platform that allows a constructive discourse to be embraced by the citizens who are willing to engage in the discourse (Papacharissi, 2002).

Overall, live blogs are changing professional routines in the newsrooms. As a recent phenomenon that tucked into the pores of news organizations, the live blog is redefining not only well-rooted journalism practices, but also users' media use patterns. It transcends boundaries between information producers and consumers, creating a space in which facts can be challenged and debated. The live blog is an emerging phenomenon that found its place in the academic literature and will keep attracting scholars who understand the importance of investigating specific characteristics of the format that creates a strong bond between professional journalists and consumers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Recruitment Statement

University of Tennessee, Knoxville: College of Communication and Information

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Mirjana Pantic, graduate student at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The title of this research is *Uses and Gratifications of Digital Media: The Case of Live Blogs.* The purpose of this study is to understand attitudes about a relatively new online news media format for covering live events – a live blog. This media format is being created by journalists who work for news sites. It provides constant updates of an event in motion.

Your participation in this study will involve filling out an online survey and answering questions about your attitudes toward live blogs and willingness to engage in live blogging.

The risks to participate in this study are no higher than the risk experienced going about your daily life. It is possible your participation in this study may benefit you or others by providing needed information about attitudes toward live blogs.

The results of this study may be published in academic research journals or presented at professional conferences. However, your name and identity will not be revealed and your record will remain anonymous. To guarantee your anonymity, no identifying information will be collected. There will be no record linking your responses to the survey to you as an individual.

Data will be stored securely in a password protected computer and will be made available only to persons conducting the research. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact Mirjana Pantic at 1-865-203-4203, or mpantic@vols.utk.edu. If you have questions about your

rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at 1-865- 974-7697, or at utkirb@utk.edu.

Thank you,

Mirjana Pantic

Doctoral Candidate, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Uses and Gratifications of Digital Media: The Case of Live Blogs

You are invited to participate in a study that is being conducted by Mirjana Pantic, doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee. The purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward live blogs and motivation for using live blogs. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer a questionnaire. The questionnaire will take about 15 minutes to complete.

There are no anticipated risks greater than those encountered in everyday life. The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely in a password protected computer and will be made available only to persons conducting the research. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link participants to the study.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact Mirjana Pantic at 1-865-203-4203, or mpantic@vols.utk.edu; or Erin Whiteside at 1-865-974-8498, or ewhites2@utk.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at 1-865- 974-7697, or at utkirb@utk.edu.

By continuing to the next page you are indicating that you have read this consent form, that you are at least 18 years of age and are voluntarily agreeing to participate in the study.

Appendix C

Questionnaire and Directions

This survey will ask you to examine if and why you read live blogs on news websites. A live blog is a journalistic genre composed of live updates of an event in motion. Written by journalists and published on news websites, the live blog places information about events in reverse chronological order. News organizations often use this format when covering breaking news and scheduled events, such as sports games. The live blog is distinctive by time stamps for each update it publishes and by diverse multimedia files it incorporates (e.g., videos, photographs, social media posts, maps, etc.).

To take the survey on live blogs, look at the following questions and select the answer that best represents you.

1. How often do you read live blogs?

1) Never
2) Once a month or less
3) 2-3 times a month
4) Once a week
5) 2-4 times a week
6) 5-6 times a week
7) Once a day
8) Several times a day

2. How often do you read online news?

1) Once a month or less
2) 2-3 times a month
3) Once a week
4) 2-4 times a week
5) 5-6 times a week
6) Once a day
7) Several times a day

3. What type of news format for daily news do you prefer to read online?

1) Traditional news (classic news article that places the most important information at the beginning of a story)
2) Live blog (online news media text that provides constant live updates on an event in motion, placing the latest information on the top)
3) I like reading both traditional news articles and live blogs
4) I don't read the news online
5) No preference

4. How likely are you to read online live coverage (i.e., a live blog) of an event of importance to you?

1) Very unlikely
2) Unlikely

3) Neither likely nor unlikely

4) Likely

5) Very likely

5. What news website do you visit most often to read live blogs?

_____

6. ***Look at the statements about live blogs listed below. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements by checking the corresponding box. Choose whether you: Strongly disagree, Disagree, feel Neutral, Agree, Strongly agree.***

1) I feel it is important that live blogs place information in reverse chronological order, so I get to read the latest information first.

2) I feel it is important that live blogs provide information in real time.

3) I feel it is important that live blogs include information gathered from the social media networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

4) I feel it is important that live blogs provide various multimedia file formats such as videos, photographs, graphics, and audio files.

5) I feel it is important that live blogs employ multiple sources.

6) I feel it is important that live blogs encourage readers to participate in a live blog creation.

7) I feel like it is hard to follow live blogs due to the great number of various news items (i.e., sources, photographs, videos, social media posts) they employ.

7. ***Look at the statements about live blogs listed below. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements by checking the corresponding box. Choose whether you: Strongly disagree, Disagree, neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree.***

1) I read live blogs to obtain information about events.
2) I read live blogs to get information for free.
3) I read live blogs to keep up with main issues of the day.
4) I read live blogs because it is entertaining.
5) I read live blogs because it is exciting.
6) I read live blogs to relax.
7) I read live blogs because it is enjoyable.
8) I read live blogs to have something to talk about with others.
9) I read live blogs to get ammunition in arguments with others.
10) I read live blogs to pass the time when I am bored.
11) I read live blogs when I have nothing better to do.
12) I read live blogs to occupy my time.
13) I read live blogs because I like seeing how the reported information is obtained by the journalist.
14) I read live blogs because they encourage me to share information about an event with a journalist who is live-blogging about that event.
15) I read live blogs because the comments I share on social media about events can become part of the live blogs.

16) I read live blogs because they allow me to post comments below them on news websites.

17) I read live blogs because they allow me to post comments below the live blog links shared on the news websites' social media accounts.

18) I read live blogs because they publish updates about an event in real time (i.e., as the event happens).

19) I read live blogs because I like to see new updates about an event when I refresh my page.

20) I read live blogs because I can access them anytime.

21) I read live blogs because I can access them anywhere.

8. Is there anything else that comes to your mind when you think about the reasons you read live blogs? If there is, please type your answer in the box below.

_____

9. What type of live blogs do you read most often on the Internet?

Select only one choice.

1) Politics (national and international)
2) Conflicts (armed clashes, terrorism)
3) Social issues (education, human rights, protests, accidents, environmental issues)
4) Economics (money, business, economy, stock market)
5) Entertainment (celebrities, culture, arts, TV shows)

6) Sports

7) Other (_____)

8) No preference

9) I do not read live blogs

10. How often do you post comments on live blogs?

1) Never

2) Once a month or less

3) 2-3 times a month

4) Once a week

5) 2-4 times a week

6) 5-6 times a week

7) Once a day

8) Several times a day

11. How often do you respond to other people's comments on live blogs?

1) Never

2) Once a month or less

3) 2-3 times a month

4) Once a week

5) 2-4 times a week

6) 5-6 times a week

7) Once a day

8) Several times a day

12. Do you share news on social media?

1) Yes

2) No

3) Don't know

13. What social media platform are you most likely to use to share news?

Select only one choice.

1) Facebook

2) Twitter

3) YouTube

4) Google Plus

5) Instagram

6) Pinterest

7) LinkedIn

8) Tumblr

9) Snapchat

10) Other_____

14. What device do you use most often to access live blogs?

1) Desktop computer
2) Laptop
3) Tablet
4) Smartphone
5) iPod
6) Other_____
7) Does not apply to me

15. What is your biological sex?

1) Male
2) Female
3) Prefer not to answer

16. What was your age on your last birthday?

_____

17. What is your class standing?

1) Freshman
2) Sophomore
3) Junior
4) Senior

5) Other_____

6) Not applicable

18. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

a) Some High School (no Diploma)

b) GED/High School Diploma

c) Technical Diploma/Certificate

d) Some college (no degree obtained)

e) Associates Degree

f) Bachelor's Degree

g) Master's Degree

h) Professional Degree (e.g., MD, JD)

i) Doctoral Degree (e.g, Ph.D., PsyD, Ed.D.)

j) Prefer not to answer

19. What is your race?

1) Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin

2) White

3) African American or Black

4) Asian

5) American Indian or Alaska Native

6) Middle Eastern or North African

7) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

8) Some other race, ethnicity, or origin

Appendix D

Variables and Research Questions

Table 15: Variables

Variable Name	Variable Description	Data Type	Question
V1: LBreadfrequency	Frequency of reading live blogs	Interval	1
V2: readingnews	Frequency of reading online news	Interval	2
V3: prefferednewstype	Preferred type of news format for daily news	Nominal	3
V4: LBlikelihoodtoread	Likelihood to read live blogs	Interval	4
V5: LBwebsite	Most visited website for live blogs (open-ended)	Nominal	5
V6: **Attitudes**	**Attitudes toward live blogs**	Interval	6(1-7)
V6_1: reverseorder	Reverse chronological order of information	Interval	6(1)
V6_2: realtimeinfo	Provide information in real time	Interval	6(2)
V6_3: socialmediainfo	Include information from social media	Interval	6(3)
V6_4: multimedia files	Provide various multimedia file formats	Interval	6(4)
V6_5: multiplesources	Employ multiple sources	Interval	6(5)
V6_6: encourageparticipation	Encourage readers to participate in a live blog creation	Interval	6(6)
V6_7: hardtofollow	Hard to follow	Interval	6(7)
V7: **Motivation**	**Motivation for consuming live blogs**	Interval	7 (1-25)

(Continued)

Table 15 (Continued)

Variable Name	Variable Description	Data Type	Question
V7: **Motivation**	**Motivation for consuming live blogs**	Interval	7 (1-25)
V7a infoseeking	Information seeking/surveillance	Interval	7(1-3)
V7_1: obtaininfo	Way to obtain information about events	Interval	7(1)
V7_2: infoforfree	Get information for free	Interval	7(2)
V7_3: keepupwithissues	Keep up with main issues of the day	Interval	7(3)
V7b: entertainment	Entertainment	Interval	7(4-7)
V7_4: entertaining	Way to entertain	Interval	7(4)
V7_5: exciting	Way to feel excitement	Interval	7(5)
V7_6: relaxing	Way to relax	Interval	7(6)
V7_7: enjoyable	Way to enjoy oneself	Interval	7(7)
V7c: socialutility	Social Utility	Interval	7(8, 9)
V7_8: totalkabout	Provide something to talk about with others	Interval	7 (8)
V7_9: ammunitioninarguments	Provide ammunition in arguments with others	Interval	7(9)
V7d: passtime	Pass Time	Interval	7(10-12)
V7_10: whenbored	Read live blogs when bored	Interval	7(10)
V7_11: nothingbettertodo	Read live blogs when there's nothing better to do	Interval	7(l1)
V7_12: occupytime	Read live blogs to occupy time	Interval	7(12)

(Continued)

Table 15 (Continued)

Variable Name	Variable Description	Data Type	Question
V7e: transparency	Transparency	Interval	7(13)
V7_13: seeobtainedinfo	See how the reporter obtained information	Interval	7(13)
V7f: participation	Participation	Interval	7(14-17)
V7_14: shareinfowithjournalists	Giving information to journalists	Interval	7(14)
V7_15: smcommentsinLB	Comments on social media become part of live blogs	Interval	7(15)
V7_16: postcommentsonLB	Post comments on news websites live blog pages	Interval	7(16)
V_17: postcommentsonsm	Post comments on news website social media accounts	Interval	7(17)
V7g: immediacy	Immediacy	Interval	7(18, 19)
V7_18: realtime	Provide real time information	Interval	7(18)
V7_19: newupdates	Provide new updates	Interval	7(19)
V7h: convenience	Convenience	Interval	7(20, 21)
V7_20: accessanytime	Access live blogs anytime	Interval	7(20)
V7_21: accessanywhere	Access live blogs anywhere	Interval	7(21)
V8: othermotivation	Other motivation for consuming LBs (open-ended)	Nominal	8
V9: LBtypestoread	Most used types of live blogs	Nominal	9
V10: Participation	**Participation in live blogs**	**Interval**	**10 (10-11)**

(Continued)

Table 15 (Continued)

Variable Name	Variable Description	Data Type	Question
V10: Participation	**Participation in live blogs**	**Interval**	**10**
V10a: commentonLB	Frequency of posting comments on live blogs	Interval	10
V10b: respondtocomments	Frequency of responding to people's comments	Interval	11
V11: sharenewsonsm	Sharing news on social media	Nominal	12
V12: smtosharenews	Most used social media to share news	Nominal	13
V13: devicetoaccessnews	Device used most often to access live blogs	Nominal	14
V14: sex	Biological sex	Nominal	15
V15: age	Respondent's age (open-ended)	Ratio	16
V16: education	Education	Ordinal	17-18
V17: race	Respondent's race	Nominal	19
V18: agecohort	Millennials and non-millennials	Nominal	16

Table 16: Research Questions and Measurements

Research Questions	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Level of Measurement	Test
RQ1: What are readers' attitudes toward diverse characteristics of live blogs?	Attitudes (V6)		Interval	Descriptive statistics

(Continued)

Table 16 (Continued)

Research Questions	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Level of Measurement	Test
RQ2: What are the key motivators of live-blog consumption?	Motivations (V7a to V7h; V8)		Interval, Nominal	Descriptive statistics
RQ2a: Are there differences between millennials and non-millennials in terms of motivations for reading live blogs?	Age cohort (V18)	Motivation (V7a to V7h)	Nominal, Interval	One-way ANOVA
RQ3: What are the key predictors of likelihood to read live blogs?	Motivations; attitudes; participation (V7a to V7h; V6; V10)	Likelihood to read live blogs (V4)	Interval	Regression
RQ4: Are there differences in likelihood to read live blogs based on demographic characteristics (i.e., sex and education), devices used to read live blogs, and social media activities?	Sex; education; devices used to access live blogs; sharing news on social media; most used social media to share news (V14; V16; V13; V11; V12)	Likelihood to read live blogs (V4)	Nominal, ordinal, interval	One-way ANOVA

(Continued)

Table 16 (Continued)

Research Questions	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Level of Measurement	Test
RQ5: Are there differences among readers in motivation for participating in live blogging based on a type of live blog they read most often (e.g., politics, conflicts, social issues, entertainment, economics, sports)?	Types of live blogs (V9)	Motivation to participate (V7f)	Nominal, Interval	One-way ANOVA
RQ6: To what extent do readers participate in live blogging?	Participation (V10a; V10b)		Interval	Descriptive statistics
RQ6a: What is the relationship between participation in live blogs and frequency of reading live blogs?	Participation; frequency of reading live blogs (V10; V1)		Interval	Pearson's correlation
RQ7: What is the relationship between frequency of reading online news and frequency of reading live blogs?	Frequency of reading online news; Frequency of reading live blogs (V2; V1)		Interval	Pearson's correlation
RQ8: What is the relationship between frequency of reading online news and likelihood to read live blogs?	Frequency of reading online news; likelihood to read live blogs (V2; V4)		Interval	Pearson's correlation

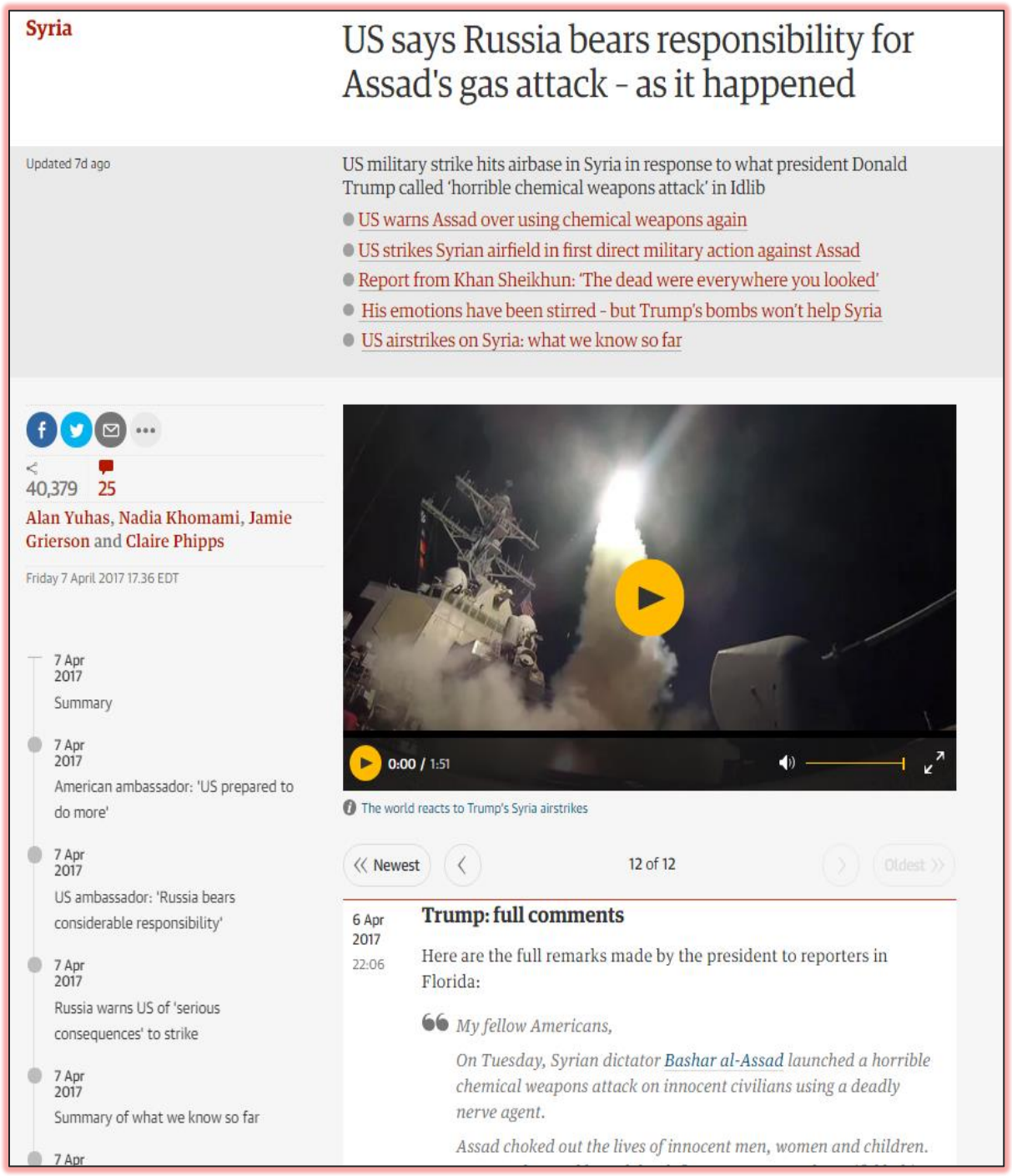
(Continued)

Table 16 (Continued)

Research Questions	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Level of Measurement	Test
RQ9: What is the relationship between attitudes toward live blogs and motivation to participate in live blogging?	Attitudes (V6) Motivation to participate (V7f)		Interval	Pearson's correlation

Appendix E

An Example of a Live Blog Published on the Guardian Website



VITA

Mirjana Pantic was born on October 29, 1980, in former Yugoslavia. After finishing high school in 1999 in the midst of NATO bombing of Serbia, Mirjana enrolled Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Belgrade. Having multiple areas of interest, she completed her undergraduate program after defending a bachelor's thesis in social psychology, titled "Dogmatic Style of Opinion." In 2004, she obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Journalism and Communications Studies.

Mirjana has been committed to journalism and politics since the age of 18. Gaining education in several disciplines was critical for her career, as she believed that a good journalist should have a wide range of knowledge that she or he can employ in explaining social processes to the public. She has worked as an editor-in-chief and a reporter for several news organizations in Serbia and abroad, while simultaneously obtaining higher education. During her career in journalism, she has conducted interviews with high-profile individuals from Europe and received five awards, including the award for investigative journalism, which was granted by the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade and the Independent Journalist Association of Serbia.

With her need for further education and interest in issues related to the rule of law, human rights, and the European Union integration process, she enrolled graduate studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences, where she earned her Master's Degree in European Studies. Her interest in the acceleration of the EU integration process of Serbia translated into the master thesis titled "Political Criteria for the EU Membership: The Case of Serbia," which she defended in 2013. As a journalist, Mirjana has written a series of articles about European standards and the conditions

for joining the EU. The Delegation of the European Union to Serbia and other Europe-oriented organizations awarded her several times for best journalistic reports covering EU-related issues.

As a student, she participated in protests against the dictatorship of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. During her masters' program she faced severe professional and personal challenges, including the loss of her parents and increased political pressure on her journalistic work. These experiences taught her about the importance of creating a better living environment and fighting for democracy, tolerance, the rule of law, and media freedoms.

She has participated in many conferences and journalism trainings in Europe, including a course on Economic and Political Reporting from Southeast Europe, organized by the Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2009, in London. Several months later, Mirjana spent a year in the U.S., where she was a visiting journalist at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Embassy in Serbia and International Broadcasting Bureau – Voice of America.

Her passion for journalism, diversity, and education, brought her back in the United States in 2014, when she enrolled a Ph.D. program in mass communication at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Mirjana's primary research interest is to explore the impact of new technologies on journalism. She is passionate about studying participatory journalism, social media, alterations in journalistic practices, and changing media ecology. During her graduate studies, she has taught journalism courses, received three scholarships, participated in several academic conferences, and published two articles about the live blogging phenomenon, which she believes challenges traditional perceptions of journalism. As of September 2017, Mirjana will continue her work in academia as an Assistant Professor in Digital Journalism at Pace University, New York.