ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	USER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MOBILE NEWS CONTENT OF *THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER* AND THE *PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS*
	Jacoba Soteropoulos Incollingo, Ph.D., 2014
Dissertation directed by:	Professor Linda Steiner, Ph.D., Philip Merrill College of Journalism

Legacy newspaper organizations have attempted to adapt to the digital – and increasingly mobile – news environment as circulation and revenue have plummeted. In Internet traffic in general, and news use in particular, the use of mobile smartphones and tablets is eclipsing desktop and laptop use. Engaging mobile news users has become critical for the news media. In recent years, Interstate General Media (IGM) – the owner of the newspapers *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* – has introduced new mobile apps and optimized its websites for mobile use. This explanatory, mixed methods study examines how IGM's digital subscribers engage with mobile news. It is user-centered research which helps journalists and scholars understand the mobile news habits and practices of legacy newspapers' digital subscribers.

Online survey results (n=632) demonstrate that participants who rely on mobile devices for news had statistically significant higher levels of engagement and enjoyment, in comparison to desktop/laptop users. Participants most at ease with technology tended

to prefer mobile devices for news, and reported statistically significant higher levels of engagement and enjoyment. The information-seeking motivation for news use, which has been historically connected to newspapers, remains dominant for all digital subscribers. Digital users engage with news by sharing stories, but reported little interest in publicly commenting on articles or creating news content.

Subsequent telephone interviews (n=30) revealed that convenience of mobile news was the most salient factor in device choice, and mobility led participants to consume more news.

Themes of continuity indicate that motivations in print news use remain salient in digital and mobile news – specifically information-seeking, the pleasure of reading, and continued powerful daily routines and habits surrounding news use. Participants indicated they continue to value professional journalists' news selections and the traditional format of newspaper presentation, and their disinterest in creating their own news content, suggest that traditional notions of gatekeeping and professionalization are not undermined by new technology.

Recommendations for IGM and other newspapers include regular use of "push-notices" to send breaking news; allowing degrees of news personalization; adapting the newspaper's "replica" edition to incorporate breaking news and content-sharing; and outreach to younger potential subscribers.

USER ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MOBILE NEWS CONTENT OF *THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER* AND THE *PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS*

by

Jacoba Soteropoulos Incollingo

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
2014

Advisory Committee:
Professor Linda Steiner, Chair
Associate Professor Ron Yaros
Assistant Professor Kalyani Chadha
Professor George Ritzer
Professor Sarah Oates

Dean's Representative:
Professor Samir Khuller

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1.
Introduction: The mobile media landscape, and the challenges facing *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*

As the traditional, printing-press model of news distribution and revenue generation struggles, newspapers have urgently attempted to adapt their content to new, digital devices. Newspapers' overall trend is precipitous decline, according to Pew's annual State of the News Media Report (2012): Nationwide, newspapers have endured a 20-year slide in paid circulation, from 62.3 million in 1990 to 43.4 million in 2010 (a 30 percent decline). In 2014, for the first time in two decades, Pew's State of the News Media Report (2014) showed an incremental increase in newspaper circulation (3 percent daily and 1.6 percent Sunday), but the report's authors cautioned that the result was influenced by the broadening of reporting rules by the Association of Audited Media, which began to include paying digital visitors and also added in the distribution of advertising circulars to nonpaying customers in circulation totals. Meanwhile, newspaper advertising revenues have also drastically declined: revenue from all advertising in 2011 was half that of generated just five years earlier ("State of the News Media," 2012). The following year, print revenue fell again, and these losses continue to exceed any gains in digital advertising: Pew reported that in 2012, only $1 in digital ad revenue was gained for every $16 in print revenue lost ("State of the News Media" 2013). Between 2012 and April 2014, print and digital advertising revenue combined dropped another 7 percent ("State of the News Media," 2014).

In recent years, some newspapers have shuttered entirely, like the *Rocky Mountain News*. Others have chosen to eschew the industrial printing-press mode of production: newspapers such as the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and the national magazine *Newsweek* have switched to digital-only publication. Meanwhile, newspapers are also facing new sources of competition – particularly online in the form of news aggregators and other novel, "digital native" forms of news and information sources, such as *Politico, ProPublica* and the *Huffington Post*. The critical nexus between journalism and digital technology made headlines in October 2013. In that month, eBay cofounder Pierre Omidyar announced he was launching First Look Media and committed $250 million to the online news venture with *The Guardian's* Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald. That same month, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos purchased *The Washington Post* for $250 million.

In this era of decline of the traditional newspaper model – or what Axel Bruns (2008) calls "casual collapse" – many newspaper companies, including the owners of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News,* have placed their hopes on the promise of new, mobile technologies both to encourage increased news consumption and as a means of monetizing digital content.

The arrival of the Apple iPad in early 2010 was heralded by the news industry as the technological innovation that could potentially "save" traditional print news media from its precipitous decline. Industry analyst Larry Kramer compared the development of the iPad to that of the printing press (Schulte, 2010), and predicted profound implications for both the industry and its consumers through the iPad's novel ability to combine text, image, sound, and video with portability and tactile interaction. *The New*

York Times' media critic, David Carr (2010), anticipated the unveiling of the iPad like

this:

> There hasn't been this much hype about a tablet since Moses came down from the mountain. …The tablet represents an opportunity to renew the romance between printed material and consumer. Think of sitting in your living room, in your bed or on a plane with a publication you really adore nestled into your lap. Since print was first conceived, people have had an intimate relationship with the text, touching, flipping and paging back and forth.

In addition to the novel feature of digitally replicating the "lean-back" *feel* of print, the

newspaper industry hoped that tablets would encourage paid content subscriptions, which

had very limited success with desktop and laptop users (Palser, 2011; Pew, 2012). The

larger tablet screens could also foster a more immersive, lengthy reading experience than

smartphones' small screens, potentially welcoming both consumers and advertisers. As

media companies began to roll out apps (for the iPad, but also for e-readers, emerging

Android-based tablets and smartphones) or optimized their existing websites for use via

mobile browsers, some initial research indicated the promise of these new devices.

First, tablet ownership has grown exponentially over a short period of time, since

the iPad's April 2010 initial release. In September 2010, just 4 percent of U.S. adults

owned tablets, but by the summer of 2012, the number had grown to 25 percent (Rainie,

2012). Figures released Jan. 30, 2013, indicate 31 percent of American adults own a

tablet (Brenner, 2013). In addition, in 2012, 55 percent of American cellphone owners

accessed the Internet on these devices, an increase of nearly 100 percent over three years

(Brenner, 2013). As of January 2014, 58 percent of American adults owned a

smartphone and 42 percent owned a tablet computer ("Pew Research Internet Project,"

2014). Sociologist Manuel Castells correctly predicted that mobile Internet use would

overtake desktop Internet use in 2014 (Halliday, 2010). That indeed occurred in the

United States in January 2014, when 55 percent of Internet usage came from mobile

devices (apps generated 47 percent of all Internet traffic, while mobile browser use

generated 8 percent); desktops and laptops were responsible for 45 percent of Internet

traffic according to data compiled by comScore, a global web analytics firm (O'Toole,

2014).

Together, these developments indicate that mobile is the future for digital content

delivery. However, it is important to note here that because tablets and smartphones can

host a wide variety of digital activities – email, games, social media, etc. – the specific

use of these devices for news consumption is a particularly important component of

analysis. Here, too, initial research shows promise for the news industry.

Recent survey research indicates that news consumption ranks among the most

popular activities on mobile devices: 64 percent of tablet owners and 62 percent of

smartphone owners reported using the device for news at least weekly (Mitchell,

Rosenstiel, Santhanam & Christian, 2012). Only e-mail use outranked news use on each

of these devices. In addition, 43 percent of these respondents reported mobile allows

them to add *more* news to their regular consumption, and 31 percent said that since

getting mobile devices, they were adding *new sources* of news.

Another recent study indicates that of U.S. adults who have adopted mobile media

devices, a majority *prefer* getting news in this manner – 53 percent reported that mobile

devices were better for consuming news than printed newspapers or news magazines

(Fidler, 2012). In 2014, the Reynolds Journalism Institute reported that more than 60

percent of smartphone owners routinely use news apps on those devices – and 40 percent

of those news apps are from newspaper organizations (Fidler, 2014).

4

Indeed, some news organizations – including ESPN, the BBC and The Guardian – began to report in 2013 that their digital audiences had become mostly mobile, according to the Nieman Journalism Lab (Ellis, 2014), with other news organizations expected to quickly follow suit.

The strategic significance of digital news delivery and mobile news delivery to legacy media organizations – particularly newspapers – was most recently made clear in when *The New York Times'* "Innovation" report, dated March 24, 2014, was leaked in May 2014 – first in part to the publication Capital New York, and then in its entirety to digital publishers BuzzFeed and Mashable. The Neiman Journalism Lab called the document – which took the *Times'* innovation team six months to produce – "one of the key documents of this media age" (Benton, 2014).

The report ("Innovation," 2014) highlighted the difficult shift from daily printed newspapers to digital news content: "The habits and traditions built over a century and a half of putting out the paper are a powerful, conservative force as we transition to digital" (p.7). The authors of the report urged the newspaper's leadership to "rethink print-centric traditions" (p. 4) and focus on what it calls "audience development" – that is, getting its journalism to a wider, engaged digital audience. The report shows that the *Times'* reach via both the web and smartphones shrank in 2013, and the value of the newspaper's homepage is decreasing dramatically in both number of visitors and time spent at the site. Indeed, the report notes that Huffington Post and the news aggregator and customizer Flipboard "often get more traffic from Times journalism" than the *Times* does (p. 3).

The "Innovation" report calls Huffington Post, Flipboard, BuzzFeed and other digital natives "disruptors" – a pattern and theory identified by Harvard Business School

Professor Clayton Christensen (2006), where new competitors use technology to offer less-expensive and initially inferior goods and services.[1] However, with improvements, these new competitors often can significantly challenge incumbents who use technology only to sustain their existing business models. [Indeed, in June 2014, web publisher BuzzFeed became a formal Harvard Business School case study in media disruption (Bercovici, 2014).] *The New York Times*, the "Innovation" report warns, faces attacks from these industry disruptors.

Instead of expecting digital readers to navigate to the home page – where the organization of content is based largely on the "traditions and limitations of print" (p. 27) – the "Innovation" report emphasizes the need to reach readers (and find new ones) via news alerts, social media, content "pushed" to users that corresponds to their geographic coordinates, and opportunities to personalize content. Younger readers, the report notes, are increasingly moving away from browsing and instead expect the news to come to them (p. 39). The report also notes, the majority of social traffic comes from mobile users.

Furthermore, the "Innovation" report advocates careful expansion of opportunities for the Times' audience to participate in user-generated content (UGC) on its various platforms:

> Our readers are perhaps our greatest untapped resource. Deepening our connection with them both online and offline is critical in a world where content so often reaches its broadest audience on the backs of other readers. And many readers have come to expect a two-way relationship with us. … This means the newsroom as a whole must take the reins in pursing user-generated content, events, and other forms of engagement in a way that reflects our standards and values. (p. 26)

---

[1] Although the *Times'* "Innovation" report incorporates Christensen's theory and the threats posed by media

Although the authors of the report advocate broader interactive UGC features for the newspaper's digital platforms, this quote also reveals the conflict between inviting user participation while also maintaining professional journalistic norms and control over the *Times'* content. For example, presently, the *Times* has a system of moderated user comments, where content is carefully vetted before going online. This process is designed to lift the nature of exchanges between readers while eliminating posts that are offensive – something other newspapers have similarly struggled with. However, the "Innovation" report notes that moderated comment sections are only opened on a few *Times* articles, and is not widespread. The report suggests expanding digital op-ed contributions to *Times* content, and connecting with its audience offline through events that people could pay to attend. Additionally, the report recommends more aggressive collection and analysis of reader data for promotional purposes as a component of connecting to its audiences.

The *Times'* report highlights both the urgency and difficulty of reshaping a traditional daily newspaper into a digital-first operation – even at one of the nation's largest and most prestigious journalism organizations. Its analysis and recommendations – widely read by journalism professionals and scholars at the time it was leaked – are useful to smaller, metropolitan newspapers which are struggling with the same issues in the realm of digital, and increasingly mobile, news.

The Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia Daily News

The Philadelphia Inquirer – once perceived as an elite journalism organization – and the scrappy tabloid, the *Philadelphia Daily News* were joined under a single owner in 1957

when *Inquirer* owner Walter Annenberg purchased the *Philadelphia Daily News*, and have since maintained separate print publications and newsrooms. Annenberg sold the papers to the Knight Newspaper chain in 1969, which was subsequently merged to become Knight Ridder. In the mid-1990s, as newspapers began to experiment with placing news content on the Internet, Knight Ridder launched the free website philly.com, featuring content from both newspapers.

The newsrooms, however, continued to operate separately and competitively against one-another. Both newspapers have won multiple Pulitzer Prizes (*The Inquirer* with 20, most recently in 2014; the *Philadelphia Daily News* with three, most recently in 2010). In addition to its string of Pulitzers, the *Inquirer* once operated six foreign bureaus, closing the last in 2006 (Enda, 2011). *New York* Times media writer David Carr in 2013 called the *Inquirer* a "once remarkable American newspaper." The *Philadelphia Daily News*, on the other hand, has been called an "always engaging tabloid with an uncanny sense of the wonderfully idiosyncratic city it calls home" (Rieder, 2010). However, despite producing award-winning journalism, like many major metropolitan papers, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* have endured a constant decline in readership and profitability.

At its peak, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* – founded in 1829 – boasted 500,000[2] weekday subscribers and nearly a million on Sundays in the early 1990s. In March 2009, the paper reported a daily circulation of approximately 288,300 and 550,400 on Sundays, according to the industry group, the Audit Bureau of Circulations (the last year the newspaper's circulation was reported separately from its sister-paper). The *Philadelphia Daily News* – a tabloid founded in 1925 – reported a 1990 daily average circulation of

---

[2] All print and digital circulation numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100th.

235,000 (the tabloid does not publish on Sundays). Over the course of nearly two decades, that circulation had dropped to approximately 99,000 daily, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations in March 2009 (Chart 1).

In 2009, the then-owners of the newspapers announced they would combine circulation figures for the newspapers by making the *Philadelphia Daily News* an edition of the *Inquirer*. The following year, the newspapers' combined daily print circulation was 342,400, according to the September 2010 Audit Bureau of Circulations. In March 2011 – the first year digital circulations were added to the audits, the Philadelphia newspapers had a combined average daily circulation of 343,700, and nearly 38,600 digital subscribers. In March 2012, the combined papers had an average of approximately 205,400 print subscribers and 55,900 digital subscribers, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. In March 2013 the two newspapers had a combined average of approximately 184,800 daily print subscribers and 68,000 digital subscribers, according to the renamed industry group, Alliance for Audited Media (formerly the Audit Bureau of Circulations). In October 2013, after the introduction of new paywall news websites for each paper, digital weekday circulation grew to nearly 84,800, according to the Alliance for Audited Media. In March 2014, according to the Alliance for Audited Media, Sunday print subscriptions of the *Inquirer* dropped nearly 50,000 copies from the prior year, to 324,500. Daily circulation of the papers declined another 23,000, to 166,100. Digital circulation, however, showed exponential growth – to 116,700 daily – however, digital editions are included with print subscriptions, so the number of digital-only subscribers is not reported by the Alliance for Audited Media.

Chart 1. Circulation of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*
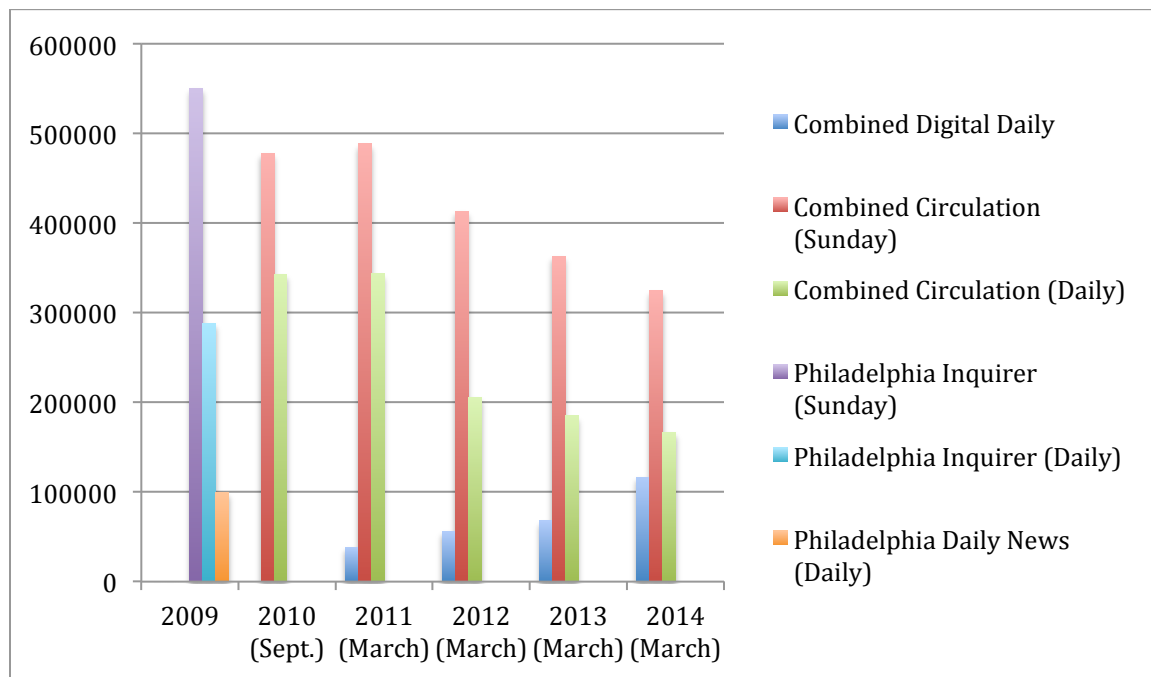
Source: data from the Alliance for Audited Media,
formerly the Audit Bureau of Circulations

As these most recent numbers indicate, although the slide in daily print circulation continues, the number of digital subscribers is rising. Digital subscribers can presently access the newspapers' news content via a fleet mobile apps and mobile-responsive websites, suggesting the relevance and timeliness of this research.

In addition to the decrease in advertising revenue and a long-term decline in print subscribers, in recent years these two newspapers have faced additional difficulties that have beset print journalism. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* have passed through five different owners since longtime corporate owner Knight Ridder dissolved in 2006. The newspapers' 2009 owners went through bankruptcy proceedings.

Both newspapers have endured multiple reductions in journalism staff. Presently, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* are owned by Interstate General Media (IGM), which purchased the newspaper properties in 2012 with funding from a group of local investors. On May 27, 2014, a court-ordered auction of the papers was held after a lengthy management dispute among the investors. Philadelphia businessmen and philanthropists H.F. "Gerry" Lenfest and Lewis Katz won the auction with an $88 million bid for the properties, but Katz was killed in an airplane crash just four days later. Lenfest quickly purchased Katz' share from Katz' son, and became the sole majority owner of IGM in June 2014.

At that point, IGM's vice president of digital operations – the daughter of one of the losing bidders in the ownership auction – resigned. So did the top three editors of philly.com, who cited an unclear digital strategy and ongoing ownership upheaval. One, the executive sports producer at philly.com, wrote in his resignation letter: "If the industry is indeed dying, it is via suicide. …And its being committed by a faction of old ideas trying to smother new ones without even realizing that the clock ticks closer to midnight with every one of their perceived victories" (Blumenthal, 2014a).

Immediately after his purchase of IGM was finalized, Lenfest vowed to find a skilled digital leader for the company: "I do think that Philly.com has got to find its own course in the digital world. … It's got to find its way, and not just be an appendage of the newspapers," Lenfest said (Dale, 2014). When he appointed an interim executive editor for the website, Lenfest stressed uniting the IGM digital operations: "we are also taking an important first step in establishing both a united digital strategy and stellar digital

leadership team for our company," Lenfest said (Blumenthal, 2014b). According to court testimony during the owners' dispute, digital revenue had been flat since at least 2006.

Like many metropolitan dailies, the newspapers have struggled in their attempts to adapt to the era of digital, mobile content. Initially, the *Inquirer* and *Daily News* presented their digital content for free charge via philly.com, using a template developed in the mid-1990s by former-owner Knight Ridder and replicated across its various newspaper properties, digitally publishing the two newspapers' stories on a single homepage.

Then, in 2011, the parent company of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Philadelphia Daily News* and philly.com, unveiled a set of subscription tablet apps. Two of the apps – the Philadelphia Inquirer Digital Edition, and the Daily News Digital Edition – reproduce each day's printed newspaper, page by page, on a tablet's screen and are called "replicas." The third app – The Philadelphia Inquirer App – is more consistent with online or tablet presentations, and offers a multimedia section, a breaking news feed, as well as the articles and photos that appear in the print edition.

Furthermore, in 2013, both *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* debuted new, paid-subscriber-only branded websites. Both inquirer.com and phillydailynews.com feature "responsive design." Responsive design allows content to smoothly transition from computer screen, to tablet format, to smartphone display. Access to the new sites is free to print subscribers of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* or the *Philadelphia Daily News*, or can be purchased as a digital-only subscription for $6.44 per week. Home delivery of *The Inquirer* newspaper costs $7 for seven days a week delivery plus free digital access, or $2.50 for Sunday-only delivery plus free all-week digital

access, while the *Philadelphia Daily News*, which does not publish on Sundays, is $6.60

for six days a week, plus free digital access.[3]. Access to philly.com, which offers select

journalism content from both newspapers, continues to provide free access with no

paywall. Its website has been optimized for mobile and is also available as a mobile app.

From a subscription standpoint, the digital efforts of the parent company,

Interstate General Media, appear to be experiencing some success. Between September

2012 and March 2013, digital readership grew from 43,224 to 67,958. After the launch

of the responsive design websites, digital subscriptions swelled to nearly 84,800 in

October 2013 and 116,700 in March 2014, according to reports by the Alliance for

Audited Media, even though print circulation figures continued to decline during this

period.

An in-depth examination of the habits, practices and desires of *The Philadelphia

Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* mobile news users, is useful as a case-study of

one news organization's attempts to promote engagement, enjoyment and satisfaction

with its mobile news users, and extend notions of news credibility onto mobile platforms.

A User-Centered Approach

By focusing on aspects of the user experience, this sort of research purposefully is

designed to avoid the pitfalls of technological determinism – that is, the viewpoint that

new technologies are the primary drivers of change, instead of subject to the intricate

workings-out accomplished by adoption and modification (by both users and developers)

to complement existing social practices. Claude Fisher (1992), in *America Calling: A*

---

[3] Subscriptions prices as of July 2014.

Social History of the Telephone to 1940, sought to explicate the adoption and use of a new technology; similarly, mobile digital technology is fairly new and users are presently negotiating its uses through their existing social practices, and notions of adoption and adaptation of technologies are furthered explored in the literature review. By incorporating users' experiences and perspectives, mobile news research can draw on the rich theories, research and insights achieved in the field of audience -- particularly active audience -- studies. Drawing on these various histories (the history of technological adoption, the history of how audiences used, interpreted, and repurposed news content from older media forms), can help researchers determine what facilitates users' access to news and their news habits, which likely are be rooted in long-standing practices.

Finally, it should be noted that users of mobile devices are not representative of the population at large. Fidler (2014) reports that mobile device ownership correlates to age, income (pertaining to tablets, but *not* smartphones), and level of education, with younger and college-educated adults more likely to be mobile users. However, as the prices of devices fall and more manufacturers compete with smaller or cheaper units, ownership is likely to continue to expand. In addition, theories of the diffusion of innovations would suggest that the widespread adoption, use and social practices surrounding new technologies are dependent on "early adopters," who form initial habits and practices and subsequently influence peers (Rogers, 2003). The connections between diffusion of innovation and the development and adoption of mobile news offerings is an important element of this dissertation, because while today's mobile usage may well constitute a "digital divide," the mobile habits and practices (and the mobile news habits and practices) of early adopters may well influence its later use by subsequent adopters.

Furthermore, the habits and preferences of today's mobile news users are also highly likely to shape the form, content, and interactive features *offered* by news organizations in the future. In addition to the information and strategies gleaned from journalism and media studies like those conducted by Pew, the Reynolds Journalism Institute and the Poynter Institute, mobile news users themselves are constantly, and perhaps unwittingly, creating metadata and analytics that media companies can examine in order to enhance or restructure their mobile content offerings in order to more effectively monetize the product, or to respond to perceived customer desire.

In short, the news practices of these early adopters of mobile devices are likely to shape both future mobile user news practices *and* future mobile news offerings. Because of increasing ownership of digital devices, and the current popularity of news consumption on these devices, understanding user engagement with mobile news sites and content is critical – both for scholars of journalism and also for print news organizations, particularly in light of the circulation and advertising woes within the traditional revenue model. This research treats the digital offerings of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* as a user-focused case study to better understand the mobile news habits and practices of IGM digital subscribers – the relatively early adopters of digital and mobile news from this traditional journalism organization.

The primary research questions here are: How do users engage with mobile news? Do perceptions of user enjoyment influence engagement; and does familiarity and ease of use with technology influence mobile news use? To what degree do digital news users exploit the features of interactivity employed by digital news users, and to what degree

do these features fulfill the expressed desires of users? Does interactivity influence engagement? Finally, how are the traditional, normative aspects of professional journalism perceived by users in the realm of mobile news?   I began with an online survey of current and former digital subscribers of IGM, looking for insight into their news habits and practices, their use or non-use of interactive features offered, their levels of engagement and enjoyment with IGM digital products, as well as demographic data. Following this, I conducted telephone interviews of a subset of survey participants, in order to more fully understand and contextualize their digital news habits, practices and experiences with digital news and interactive features.

This dissertation includes the following chapters: In the literature review I examine notions regarding active audiences; the user-centered framework of uses and gratifications research; the nexus between engagement and enjoyment of news; traditional ideas of gatekeeping within journalism; sociological study of prosumption and its applicability to the interactive features of the digital and mobile world; and the diffusion of innovations. Taken together, these theories are useful in examining the device and source choices news users make, and the motivations behind those choices. It also seeks to incorporate an examination of users' adoption of new technological devices and use of interactive features, through the lens of existing social practices.

The methods chapter describes the two phases of this explanatory, mixed-methods approach – first a quantitative online survey of IGM's digital subscribers, and then subsequent qualitative telephone interviews with a subset of survey participants. The chapter also discusses how these two data sets were analyzed and ultimately combined for this mixed-methods research.

The fourth chapter details the quantitative findings, which indicate that users who identified tablets and smartphones as their main device for getting digital news report statistically significantly higher levels of both engagement with and, compared to subscribers who primarily use desktop/laptop computers. Participants who reported comfort and ease with technology were more likely to choose mobile devices for news, rather than desktop or laptop computers. However, survey participants reported limited interest in interactive features of sharing news, publicly commenting on news, or contributing their own news content for IGM, suggesting little desire to participate in prosumptive activity on IGM digital sites. In addition, most digital subscribers valued the traditional form and format of newspaper-style presentation of news found in "replica" editions, which digitally reproduce the morning newspapers.

The fifth chapter analyzes participants' qualitative answers during the telephone interviews. Mobile news users told the researcher that convenience was the most salient factor in their choice to get news on tablets and smartphones, instead of desktop/laptops or other traditional forms of news media, including the printed paper. In addition, these mobile-first participants said they believed mobility allowed them to consume *more* IGM news. And while interview participants said they shared news stories both online and offline, most said they had no interest and no time to leave public comments or contribute news content to IGM sites. Digital subscribers generally conformed to normative notions of journalism when asked to define "news," and said they valued the news selection and presentation decisions made by professional journalists.

The sixth chapter combines findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases – essentially "mixing" the results, and discusses the research findings. It examines themes

of continuity: continuity in news use, and continuity in gratifications sought and obtained, from the traditional, printed newspaper to the digital forms of news content now available on mobile devices. Triangulation of data was found in three areas: the positive connection between enjoyment and engagement among mobile news users; the role of familiarity/ease of use with technology in influencing mobile news use; and the relative lack of user interest in interactive features allowing prosumptive activity – particularly in the areas of commenting on news stories or prosuming news content for IGM.

In the conclusion, I argue that the demographic data of participants, the nature of their online survey answers, and the news habits and practices they described during telephone interviews reveal a loyal group of digital readers of Interstate General Media digital products, across a variety of devices and IGM offerings. Many of these news users reported they read IGM news – and most frequently *The Philadelphia Inquirer* replica edition – following habits they developed as print-newspaper subscribers. This suggests that these users embrace the traditional, newspaper linear-style form of news and all the attendant professional journalism gatekeeping functions associated with it. Aside from sharing news stories – largely via email – they do not actively use the interactive, prosumptive digital features offered. However, because this research indicates that these two newspapers' digital users tend to be older, it suggests that Interstate General Media is not attracting younger users to its digital offerings. Thus, I suggest how IGM – and possibly other metropolitan papers – might rethink its digital strategy by making greater use of push notices, and incorporating a breaking news section within its apps and web sites that feature a "replica" edition which reproduces the morning printed paper. In addition, it suggests incorporating other interactive or prosumptive features into digital

content – for example, by allowing users to "follow" topics or writers of their choosing, and actively soliciting users' photos and videos during and immediately after public, breaking news events in the Philadelphia region.

Ultimately, I hope this user-centered approach examination of the habits, practices, perceptions of credibility, and level of content-engagement of the mobile news users of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* will inform scholarship on mobile news and contribute the understanding of uses and gratifications sought by digital news users, within the digital interactive limitations offered by the parent company of these two legacy newspapers. I hope it sheds light both on the mobile news use of a metropolitan media audience, but also provide meaningful guidance to other journalism organizations as they struggle to remain engaging, relevant, and financially viable in the mobile mediascape. Although the research is specific to one journalism organization and its users, I believe it has broader applicability in the realms of scholarship and journalism practice. Many large metropolitan newspapers, such as *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*, have struggled in recent years with declines in both circulation and advertising, with both national newspapers and small, local newspapers faring better (*The Economist,* 2009; Pew, 2012). This research may illuminate circumstances particular to non-national, urban journalism organizations. Aspects of users' engagement and producers' mobile content and interactive features are likely to have applicability beyond the nature of this particular market.

CHAPTER 2.
Literature Review

Laying the groundwork for an analysis of user engagement with the mobile content of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*, this review of the literature initially recalls the rich tradition of audience (particularly active audience) studies, and uses and gratifications theory. The work of the active audience emphasizes the diverse activities and degrees of agency (which fluctuate) by the user of mobile news. The uses and gratifications framework, and research involving newspapers, the Internet, online news, interactive news features, and general use of mobile devices, are all useful in examining engagement with mobile news, and thus is incorporated in this dissertation. The varied roles of the active audience – placed within the context of media ecology and political economy – may be the most useful theoretical approach to understanding and parsing levels of agency in various media choices, interpretations, repurposing, and creative activity.

Indeed, the features of interactive technologies move interpretive use from the margins to the center (Livingstone, 2003). Communications scholars suggest the technological capabilities of our digital age not only facilitate, but also *encourage* and *value*, user participation. Henry Jenkins calls this a new "participatory culture" (2006) – a significant departure from traditional theories of passive reception of media content. Mark Deuze (2009) offers a compelling argument that news content will be increasingly *valued* by its ability to facilitate interactivity between users and producers, and that news media must evolve to meet these new expectations. He predicts "that a future news system will be based – at least in part – on an interactive and connective mode of

production where media makers and users will co-exist, collaborate, and thus effectively compete to play a part in the mutual … construction of reality" (p. 24).

Here is where the sociological study of "prosumption" is useful. The concept of the "prosumer," – a term coined by "Futurist" Alvin Toffler (1980) – is a fusion of industrial binary notions of producer and consumer. Prosumption, in its more idealistic form, privileges creativity. If digital technologies enable, and even privilege, interactivity; and if the active audience is engaged in the inherently intertwined activities of media consumption and production – these notions seem complementary to conceptions of the prosumer as "primordial" (Ritzer, 2010, 2012).

While audience agency is useful when examining content choices, interpretations, and prosumptive interactions, this agency is not without limits. Media ecology, and attendant social situation and technical features, may either empower or restrict levels and types of agency. In addition, economic structures of power and capital may serve to manage, harness and/or exploit expressions of agency. This contextualized evaluation of the active audience is not a celebratory declaration of empowerment, but an acknowledgment that practices of "audiencing" often are the sites of negotiations within social and economic structures. I believe incorporating media ecology and analysis of the technical features offered (or denied) to audiences provides a more holistic approach to understanding what audience members do and why, in both traditional and new media.

Finally, seeking to understand what audience members do with mobile news content may be examined under the lens of user engagement – the sustained interest in mobile news content, where the format and nature of the presentation likely influence the degree of that interest. This connection between interest and environment has also been

called "situational interest" (Yaros, 2006), in contrast to individuals' specific, more personal interests. Because the mobile news environment utilizes different forms and technical features than traditional print news, this intersection between environment and engagement is particularly useful in helping to understand what facilitates or hinders mobile news consumption.

Key concepts/aspects in understanding user engagement in the mobile news environment include: the form of news, the usability of content, features offering interactivity -- particularly those permitting user-generated content, knowledge of and adaptation to user habits, notions of normative journalism practices, and elements of enjoyment. These aspects are not mutually exclusive; instead, they are likely to overlap and share common features and, thus, methods of investigation.

This chapter begins with an overview of audience theories, then focuses on notions of the active audience and how uses and gratifications research – as a user-centered framework – has been used to examine traditional newspaper use, and, more recently, the Internet, mobility, and digital and interactive news. Because interactive features may be considered under the lens of prosumption, this literature comes next. Media ecology, the social construction of technology and the diffusion of innovations, and notions of media "gatekeeping" follow. Finally, the chapter offers an overview of notions of news user engagement and enjoyment and draws conclusions about how, when taken together, these various literatures form a theoretical basis for a user-centered inquiry on the mobile news habits and practices of the digital subscribers of a metropolitan, legacy-media company.

Audience Theories

Tamar Liebes (2005) writes that audience research may be viewed as a historical story of progress – of initially underestimating viewers, only to discover their capacity for agency. Over time, scholars' conceptions of the audience have generally become more complex and nuanced. Likewise, over time, the roles of audience members and the specific features provided to users have been influenced by technological change. In an age of "new" media, rather than become swept away by technological determinism, it is constructive instead to attend to the theoretical underpinnings of traditional audience studies, and examine which facets hold up (and which might not) in light of a changing media landscape, shifts in assessments of "mass" audiences, and significant challenges to legacy media companies and their traditional models of economic production.

Denis McQuail (2010) defines audiences as: "All those who are actually reached by particular media content of media 'channels,'" who may be further regarded as targeted/intended receivers, a public, or a socio-cultural body (p. 549). However, this definition, with its emphasis on passivity ("receivers" who are "reached"), is not fully satisfactory in light of the complex issues of agency and meaning-making activity. This view becomes even more problematic in light of opportunities for textual interactivity within digital media, and scholars have acknowledged their struggles with the continuing utility of the term "audience" (Madianou, 2009; Liebes, 2005; Livingstone, 2003).

Researchers usually refuse to treat "the audience" as a singular, homogenous unit, given both the multitude of channels and content, and the greatly varied activities related to choices, uses, interpretations, repurposing and creation. In addition, "the audience" is

not static, but rather seems to form and reform. As a consequence of all these developments, the term "audience" (and its historical baggage that suggests both mass and passivity) continues to require reexamination. Scholars have sought new terms to more fully or accurately describe these individuals and groups.

Jay Rosen (2006) used the phrase "the people formerly known as the audience." The phrase "formerly known as" can be viewed as a shorthand for something previously known, but evolving and therefore difficult to conventionally describe. In other words, we know what was previously meant by "audience," but currently have no term that fully encompasses their transformation. Rosen further characterizes this newly-transformed group as "simply *the public* made realer, less fictional, more able, less predictable." Rosen emphasizes how empowered, active consumers are now enabled to take choices and decisions away from professional editors and independently undertake that role.

Axel Bruns (2006; 2008; 2010) coined the terms "produser" and "produsage" in an attempt to describe how users can actively use and shape content in a fluid, non-vertical heterarchy – one where open participation yields constantly evolving products. "Produsage," he writes, is content that is the creation of users who continuously update it themselves – turning them into active and informed "produsers." Bruns, with an exclusive focus on Web 2.0, posits this activity is a shift away from passive consumption of industrial media content. Further, Bruns writes that neologisms such as his "produser," help the scholarly process by allowing researchers to "take a fresh look at emerging phenomena without carrying the burden of several centuries of definition and redefinition" (Bruns, 2006, p. 1).

Other scholars, however, have rejected Bruns' new term. Bird (2011) writes:

Exactly who or what 'the audience' is has been hotly debated for decades, with conceptions of the audience ranging from a definite, static group of people 'receiving' a message, to arguments that there are no distinct, identifiable audiences, because we all interact with media in continually shifting ways. I certainly place myself at the latter end of the continuum. …Nevertheless, until someone comes up with a better term, I find that 'audience' and 'audience practices' are still useful ways to discuss engagements with the media. (p. 512)

Madianou (2009) agrees that "the term 'audiences,' despite its limitations, seems a useful and rather neutral shorthand for the range of practices associated with the cultural and social phenomenon that the news is" (p. 334).

However, because the term "audience" does seem inadequate to fully represent a very complex and shifting concept, I will use the hybrid term "user." Like Van Dijck (2009), I believe this term more fully encompasses the individuals and groups who read, listen to, watch and/or *use* mediated content (with "use" understood to include activities as diverse as interpretation, to creative appropriation and refashioning, to original content production in a mediated channel). Although the term and my description are broad, I want to clearly express that I do not view users as a monolith. To do so would be to overlook users' diverse nature, varied interpretations of texts, and range of interactive activities. The term "user," in this research, draws on the rich history of audience studies, while it also attends to the ever-changing technological features that permit individuals and groups to use, make meaning of, and interact with a variety of media content.

While specific audiences for theater, sport, etc., have clearly formed and reformed for millennia, the creation of the printing press, and later film and broadcast, sparked the notion of the collective and continuous mass audience. Researchers treated mass audience members as a collection of passive receivers of one-way messages; as such, audiences were presumably highly susceptible to the powerful influence of that content,

25

such as in the much-cited example of Adolf Hitler's use of radio for propaganda. Tamar Liebes (2005) wrote: "Assuming a helpless, passive audience, they [communications researchers] went to work to examine the degree of exposure to cinema, radio and television. Audiences were seen as waiting to be influenced" (p. 361).

The "hypodermic needle" model, as it was mockingly termed by critics, is essentially the extreme example of this perceived passivity, where content/messages are "injected" into individual audience members, who, according to this exaggerated version of the model, have no capacity for interpretation or oppositional reading. While audience studies have evolved since this early conception of the mass audience, the hypodermic-needle model is useful because it can represent the pole of ultimate audience passivity in a continuum of audience activity; and thus reminds researchers not to get swept up in the promise or threat of evolving or new media at the level of the individual. Instead, audience media reception and the adoption of new technologies are best viewed through the lens of existing social practices, such as interpretation and fashioning meaning/sense from content.

As media research began to uncover more limited media effects, notions of the "active audience" began to take hold – an important acknowledgment of the agency of audience, and a focus on their varied activities. Researchers in the uses and gratifications field began to examine audience choices and satisfactions derived from media and its content. In the realm of reception studies, scholars began to consider social context, individual interpretation, and the making of meaning. Liebes (2005) places both uses and gratifications notions of selectivity and later reception study under the rubric of active audiences, and I concur. Though they focus on different things audiences do, and

different audience motivations, and often use different methods of research, both uses and gratifications work and reception studies examine aspects of agency. This turn toward theorizing and studying the active audience (and the attendant qualitative methods employed) has great utility in understanding behavior, content use, and media adoption. This is true with legacy media, but can also constructively inform scholars today seeking to evaluate audiences in a changing media environment.

Uses and Gratifications

Uses and gratifications research essentially seeks to understand media use – assuming as it does that audience members can properly explain their motives for consumption and that the gratifications sought by audiences explain their media choices. The underlying theory is that people use media to fulfill – or gratify – their needs and wants; thus audience activity is central to uses and gratifications research (Rubin, 1993; Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000; Ruggiero, 2000). It is a distinct departure from viewing the audience as an undifferentiated mass, and rather understanding audiences as comprising groups and subgroups determined by individual interests and also under the influence of family, friends, etc. Agency is expressed via the act of choice, which is a fairly limited range of action in comparison to meaning-making or notions of "prosumption" (to be discussed later). Gratifications may be understood as a range of desires such as escapism and entertainment (Yoo, 2011), as well as surveillance, which Ruggiero (2000) defines as seeking information about political affairs, community affairs and events. The uses and gratifications approach is user-centered, and thus particularly appropriate for this inquiry

27

into the news habits and practices of Interstate General Media's (IGM) digital subscribers (users).

The uses and gratifications approach has been used for decades to examine readers' use of newspapers. In 1948, Bernard Berelson gathered qualitative interview data from 60 readers during a 17-day delivery strike of eight major New York City newspapers "to understand the function of the modern newspaper for its readers" (p. 112). Berelson found that while a core of readers used the newspaper as an indispensable source of news, the newspaper also was used as a tool in daily life; for respite; and for social prestige or conversational value. The daily newspaper, he wrote, gratified its users via the pleasure of reading: "Of the major sources of reading matter, the newspaper is the most accessible. It is also cheap, and its contents can be conveniently taken in capsules" (p. 125). Berelson also found that readers formed powerful daily routines and habits surrounding the newspaper – "documented by references to the ritualistic and near-compulsive character of newspaper reading" (p. 125).

Conducting research under a similar situation, William R. Elliott and William L. Rosenberg (1987) examined the 1985 Philadelphia newspaper strike – particularly relevant for this research because it involved *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*, which are presently owned by Interstate General Media, the company whose digital subscribers are the focus of this dissertation. In telephone surveys, the authors focused on four gratifications: surveillance (seeking information about political or community affairs and events), killing time, entertainment, and advertising, and found a strong correlation between surveillance and newspaper use, but not the other variables. This, they wrote, suggested that media gratifications may depend

more on habit, reflecting readers' environmental factors and social situation. Print news, in particular, has been closely associated with content and information-seeking motives and gratifications (Vincent & Basil, 1997).

The uses and gratifications approach not only has an extensive history in research on newspapers and traditional broadcast media, it has also been at the center of new media research (Ruggiero, 2000; Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000; Lee, 2013). Indeed, in an age of media diversification and abundant new media sources, the audience members' choices and the motives behind those choices continue to be important – perhaps more so, given the vast array of choice now available. This line of inquiry is particularly relevant for legacy newspapers – for nearly two decades employing the Internet has been viewed as a central strategy for retaining and growing readers (Fulton, 1996; "Innovation" report, New York Times, 2014). Initially, newspapers were criticized for not fully employing interactive technologies (Bardoel & Deuze, 2001), instead resorting to "shovelware" — simply reproducing the content of their print editions. Thus, the uses and gratifications framework has practical applications as well as theoretical utility.

Scholars have used uses and gratifications to study general use of the Internet (Papacharissi and Rubin, 2000;); the use of online newspapers (Yoo, 2011); Internet news (LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Mersey, Malthouse and Calder, 2010, 2012); general use of mobile devices (Leung and Wei, 2000; Wei & Lo, 2006); and how the uses and gratification model might be extended to incorporate unique interactive features of Web 2.0 – including newly explicated gratifications such as status outcomes or monetary outcomes, which were not included in earlier uses and gratifications iterations (LaRose & Eastin, 2004; Chung & Yoo, 2008). Sundar and Limperos (2013) suggest that new

technological features influence specific process gratifications (that is, gratifications gained from using the media, as opposed to gratifications derived from media content). These authors suggest that features of the Internet – including agency, interactivity, and navigability – stimulate gratifications not previously detected in users of printed newspaper and broadcast media. For example, in the realm of e-commerce, Sundar and Limperos identify "scaffolding" as a navigability-based gratification that methodically moves customers through a structured, step-by-step purchase process to avoid order mistakes and errant charges (p. 516). The concept of scaffolding is useful in evaluating the linear construction of digital replica newspapers, like the ones offered by IGM.

A review of the literature reveals that, as with traditional print newspapers, the surveillance/information-seeking gratification plays a large role in both Internet use and Internet news use. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found that information-seeking (surveillance) yielded the highest mean score as a predictor of Internet use. The authors noted that convenience was a salient factor in their research. Flanagin and Metzger (2001) likewise found that Internet news consumption is most driven by information-seeking, with social motivation second, followed by entertainment-motivation and opinion-motivation. Lee (2013) suggests that research suggests people who fall in different demographic categories have different motivations for news use – that older users are more likely seeking information, while younger users are motivated by social and entertainment gratifications. Her research also found that in the realm of social media, Facebook and Twitter were used most by those with entertainment, opinion and social motivations, and used least frequently by those with information-seeking motives.

Ruggiero (2000) found that the Internet demands a higher level of user interactivity than traditional media. Studying audience motivations for using interactive features of an online newspaper, Chung and Yoo (2008) suggest that online news audiences and traditional media users have similar goals: Information seeking/surveillance remained a central motivation for news, followed by entertainment. Less salient was the socialization motivation. Additionally, because these users were goal-oriented information seekers, they were most likely to use interactive features limited to the medium (such as searches or galleries) as opposed to human-medium activity permitting customization or human-human interactivity (contacting writers, leaving public comments). The surveillance motivation, Chung and Yoo found, was not associated with the use of human-human interactive features.

The uses and gratifications approach incorporates audience agency and views users' media choices within the framework of their needs and goals (McQuail, 2010). In other words, it examines how people choose and use media, and what specific satisfactions they seek when making these decisions. Given the vast array of choice offered via mobile devices, a uses and gratifications approach has great utility in this user-centered research.

Additional Aspects of Audience Agency

In addition to the understanding the media choices that audiences make, gaining insight into what audiences *do* with that media and content is essential to understanding agency. Reception research rejects notions of one-way transmission of messages, and permits

31

flexibility in the reception of content – that is, *readers* decode texts and make their own meaning (Hall, 2001). According to Hall's famous formulation, audiences – influenced by social positioning and power relations – may accept encoded meanings as they were intended, or negotiate meanings based on their own perspectives and experiences, or find oppositional meanings in texts. Similarly, John Fiske (1987) emphasized that audiences are 'social subjects,' whose readings of open texts are influenced by personal histories and social identities (race, gender, class, etc.). The making of meaning, situated in lived experiences, acknowledges that audiences have the power to reinterpret and/or oppose hegemonic ideology. Audiences are not understood as an undifferentiated mass, but may be thought of as communities of shared experiences.

In addition to making *meaning*, audiences have further extended their exercise of agency by refashioning and creating *content*. This is not a novel function, native to Web 2.0. Marshall McLuhan (1964) famously suggested that the content of any medium is always another medium (for example, the written word is the content of print). Akin to McLuhan, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999) argue that all media is refashioned, or 'remediated,' from existing media (for example, how a medieval religious painting might remediate a story from the Bible).

Henry Jenkins (2006), in his pre-Internet analysis[4] of *Star Trek* fan culture, examines the reworking of existing content and original content production: "For fans, consumption sparks production, reading generates writing, until the terms seem logically inseparable. … Spectator culture becomes participatory culture" (p. 473). Furthermore, Jenkins firmly places this creative activity within, and subject to, fans' individual lived

---

[4] Although this citation is obviously post-internet, Jenkins notes the material was based on a 1985 presentation at the Iowa Symposium and Conference on Television Criticism. The original primary-source fan material he cites precede that conference date, and thus what we know today as the Internet.

experiences (such as gendered fan writing). This creative agency also allows for explicit

oppositional expression: "Resistance comes from the uses they make of these popular

texts, not from subversive meaning that are somehow embedded within them" (p. 491).

This can be interpreted as extending Hall's and Fiske's concept of oppositional

interpretation of texts. Furthermore, Fiske writes that the repurposing of television

content into new texts, games or songs is an extension of the ancient tradition of oral

culture – it is active and participatory.

Although Bruns' 21st century neologisms "produser" and "produsage" (2006,

2008) suggest revolutionary novelty made possible only by digital technology, Fiske,

McLuhan, and others clearly indicate that activities of repurposing and refashioning

media content are not exclusive to the digital age. Recently, S. Elizabeth Bird (2011)

asked "Are we all produsers now?" to point out both that the majority of online users are

not creators, and that creative refashioning and content creation in the realm of fandom

predate Internet activity. Perhaps a different way of posing the question is, "Have we

been creatively using, interpreting and repurposing media content all along?" It seems to

me that the answer, in light of various theoretical approaches to audience agency, is yes.

The question then becomes one regarding the specific *nature* and *degree* of this use,

interpretation, and repurposing.

This is where the sociological study of prosumption is useful to the study of active

audiences.

Prosumption

The concept of prosumption encompasses the post-industrial conditions where the activities of consumer and producer converge – a concept worthy of exploration in this examination of mobile news use. "Futurist" Alvin Toffler is credited with coining the term "prosumer" in *The Third Wave* (1981). Although Toffler's book was written well before the Internet, he presciently predicted that new technologies (particularly home computing) would play an integral role in the rise of prosumption. He argued that prosumption is a hallmark of the post-industrial, highly technological new era of civilization. Toffler claimed that while industrialization split apart the roles of producer and consumer, changes in the new era would reunite the producer and consumer. He predicted this would offer new opportunities for creativity and self-sufficiency. However, from a critical perspective, Toffler's did not anticipate that markets would adapt to incorporate prosumptive work, and that this sort of labor (particularly unpaid) would be subject to exploitation. In addition, while Toffler focuses on creative labor, he does not anticipate the sort of "ambient labor"[5] (such as data mined from Internet user's clicks and browsing habits) which is produced at no cost, but creates profit for others.

The notions of prosumption and produsage are frequently over-celebrated and exaggerate agency and liberty. Nonetheless, critical examination of how consumers' knowledge and skills may be used to the benefit of corporations is relevant here (Kotler, 1986; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004; Bruns, 2006, 2008, 2010). Because legacy media operations in the U.S. are almost exclusively for-profit corporations (and so is IGM, whose users are the focus of this dissertation), these

---

[5] Rey, PJ. (2012). "Alienation, Exploitation, and Social Media." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56(4), p. 399-420.

organizations have practical interests in compartmentalizing, controlling and ultimately exploiting some aspects of prosumption.

As marketing researchers who seek ways to "co-opt" consumers' skills and "manage" their expectations and diverse desires, Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000) endow consumers with greater agency (unlike traditional notions of the silent and passive consumer). Prahalad and Ramaswamy's use of terms like "managed" transactions, "determined" choices, and "staged" experiences indicate that it is business and industry that control co-creation. The consumer has little true power in this equation, but merely the opportunity to choose from menus "dictated" by the company. The agency of the consumer in Prahalad and Ramaswamy's world of co-creation is severely limited, especially in contrast to the romantic notions of the prosumer, as initially put forth by Toffler. Their analysis is useful in understanding the extremely limited interactive opportunities for prosumptive activities offered by the digital news vehicles produced by Interstate General Media (where prosumptive interactivity is manifested only in opportunities to share content via email or social media networks, and the opportunity to leave user comments in some of IGM's digital platforms).

The original creators of the terms prosumer, produser and co-creator all notably viewed society, consumers, and the economy as in a state of profound change. Each emphasized a transformation from traditional notions of the "passive consumer" to the more active, knowledgeable and skilled user. In many ways, this has parallels to the history of audience studies in the fields of journalism and communications. Toffler (1980) viewed industrial audiences as subjects of a "monolithic consciousness" transmitted by mass media (p. 389). Similarly, from communications and media studies,

initial conceptions of the industrial, massified media audience was one of abject

passivity. But inquiry into media effects revealed that audiences were not a monolith, as

initially conceptualized. Instead, audience members made choices, interpretations, and

constructed individual meaning out of media content, and notions of the "active

audience" emerged.

Toffler predicted that in the future, individual prosumers would construct their

own "configurative me" (p. 389). They would pick and choose among bits of mediated

and prosumed information to prosume their own identities. Similarly, Marshall McLuhan

(1964) wrote that the electric feedback loop of new media "affects not just production,

but every phase of consumption … for the consumer becomes the producer in the

automation circuit, quiet as much as the reader of the mosaic press makes his own news,

or just is his own news" (p. 349). McLuhan further wrote: "The electronic age is literally

one of illumination. Just as light is at once energy and information, so electric

automation unites production, consumption, and learning in an inextricable process" (p.

351).

Toffler's notion of the "configurative me" also has echoes in media studies notion

of "the daily me" advanced by Nicholas Negroponte (1995) and Cass Sunstein (2009),

who say audience members use digital customization technologies to limit their

consumption to items and topics previously of interest to them, or positions with which

they already agree. This notion of the "daily me" is important in this dissertation, when

considering the news choices of IGM digital subscribers, and the lack of personalization

features available in IGM's fleet of digital offerings.

In any case, these behaviors – the inherently intertwined audience activities of media consumption and production – complement conceptions of the prosumer as "primordial" (Ritzer, 2010, 2012). That is, the notion that any separation between consumer and producer is an artificial construct has great utility in the consideration of the notions of the active audience, where audiencing may always be regarded as simultaneously consumptive and productive.

The intersection between prosumption and news is also worthy of further exploration, as some traditional journalism organizations promote and facilitate prosumer activities (like CNN's iReport). However, aspects of audience exploitation in this realm deserve further inquiry and analysis. In addition to soliciting free content, journalism organizations increasingly mine metrics, and their audiences unwittingly labor for free through the valuable information constructed via their mouse clicks. Notions of exploitation in the realm of the prosumer will be further addressed in the "Political Economy and Exploitation" subsection of this review of the literature.

The recent growth in the study of prosumption is clearly a multi-disciplinary effort, with significant exchange occurring within the field of media studies. However, most of this work has focused on emerging social media practices and blogs, the exception being Bruns' exploration of IndyMedia and citizen journalism. More study is needed of prosumption in *news journalism*, which would likely inform both our understanding of prosumption practices and the many facets of the relationship between journalists and their audiences. Just as Ritzer argues that the activities of producer and consumer are constantly intertwined, so too are aspects of active and passive audiencing. In other words, even passive reception always involves some minimal amount of choice-

making. And creative agency always relies to some degree on other content, media, etc. (McLuhan; Fiske; Bolter and Grusin).

Together, theories of both prosumption and active audiences can be employed to study both traditional and new media, and provide a useful approach to identify behavioral continuity in a time of media change. Because audiences/prosumers do not occupy a static position, this perspective allows for diverse levels of activity among individuals, groups, content and channels. While I believe prosumption and levels of agency are useful, it does not mean I see audience members as completely liberated agents whose choices/uses are unaffected by external powers. To that end, I believe media ecology and aspects of gatekeeping to contextualize conceptions of active audiences, and the limitations placed on them should be incorporated, as described below.

Media Ecology and Technology

To examine how emerging technologies may influence or facilitate audience activity, I advocate a media ecology that does not place the technology at the center of inquiry and avoids technological determinism, but seeks to understand how audience members and groups use the features of technologies and devices. This perspective is aided by the user-centered viewpoint of Claude Fischer (1992), whose social history of telephone adoption argued that "material change alters the conditions of daily life but does not determine the basic character of that life" (p. 5). Fischer urged researchers to focus on the consumers of new technologies, in order to understand the social implications of novel devices.

38

The works of Marshall McLuhan (1962, 1964) were sometimes criticized as examples of technological determinism (Williams, 1967; Shaw, 1999). McLuhan focused on specific technologies (the printing press, television, etc.) and held that new technologies have profound impact and are the primary cause of social change – a seductive but troubling logic and conclusion that views technological change as a coherent whole that operates on all members of society equally. He was also criticized for having an overly (solely) positive view of technology, and for looking at its positive implications at the level of the individual. However, on the occasions when McLuhan focused on the consumers (as Fischer advocates), some ideas emerged that are useful – and in some cases prescient – in order to better understand audiences.

McLuhan suggests that print culture facilitates homogeneity, uniformity, repeatability, and linear chronology/reasoning (1962). Like strong media effects theorists, McLuhan sees the print audience as passive: "Consistently, the 20th century has worked to free itself from the conditions of passivity, which is to say, from the Gutenberg heritage itself" (p. 315). However, McLuhan sees the new media of what he calls the 'electronic age' (television, and today, the Internet) as transforming society, turning consumers into producers, turning the linear into the simultaneous. He wrote: "The electric implosion … compels commitment and participation" (1964, p. 5).

However, I would argue that new technologies do not undo or erase the social practices since Gutenberg, or even those that came before. Instead of 'compelling' commitment and participation, perhaps technologies like Web 2.0 serve to facilitate, or expand the reach, of pre-existing social practices and audience activity. Textual interpretation, meaning-making, oppositional readings and content repurposing may find

new forums, improved ease-of-use, and greater capacity for sharing with new technologies. In essence, a negotiated reading of McLuhan suggests that new technologies may ultimately be shaped by their uses and existing social processes, and incorporated by existing social practices.

Yochai Benkler (2006) views the present media ecology as a function of a larger "networked information economy." As opposed to the "industrial information economy," Benkler writes that networked audiences are engaged in information sharing, commons-based peer production and what he calls "new practices of self-directed agency" (p. 137). The network, Benkler optimistically suggests, allows greater participation in cultural meaning-making, and allows audiences to effectively monitor and disrupt the power of the mass media.

New technology brings new technological features, and studies of audiences and their varied activities are contextualized by understanding the media ecology in which audience members read, listen, watch, interpret and use. These technological features may facilitate, expand or hinder existing social practices of audiences. Because new technological features have become part of our media ecology, scholarship on the diffusion of innovations and the social construction of technology is helpful. Diffusion of innovations theory addresses how new technologies and practices are introduced and adopted by actors and by social systems. Sociologist and communications scholar Everett Rogers first published his diffusion of innovations theory in 1962. He defined diffusion as "the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time and among the members of a social system" (2003, p. 5). In this process, Rogers wrote, the adoption of technologies occurs in five stages: 1) exposure to or knowledge of

the new innovation; 2) "Persuasion" (p. 170) – the formulation of attitudes, either positive or negative, about the innovation; 3) decision of either adoption or rejection; 4) use; and 5) the "confirmation" stage (p. 189), where the adoption-decision is evaluated and either reinforced or reversed. For most individuals, whom Rogers calls "members of a social system" (p.23), the decision to adopt or reject an innovation depends heavily on the adoption decision made by fellow members of their social system.

Rogers suggested that two key factors in the second "persuasion" phase in the adoption of new technology are "relative advantage," but also "compatibility" (p. 174) – that something is not altogether new, but demonstrates some aspects of continuity with past technologies or practices. These notions are particularly valuable in considering users' adoption of digital news, and most specifically, a digital newspaper replica. Furthermore, Rogers suggests that "critical mass" is required for an innovation to become accepted. In the case of newspapers, Pablo Boczkowski (2005) wrote that Internet adoption came "only after it seemed evident to key decision makers that relevant technical and social developments had a reasonable chance of taking hold" (p. 48). The limited interactive features offered by IGM may be considered under this lens.

Diffusion theory has become a dominant theoretical approach in the study of new media (Garrison, 2001), and Lievrouw (2002) offers a definition of technology that incorporates not just devices, but the practices, knowledge, and social arrangements that surround them. She, too, addresses the continuing applicability of the approach with new communication technologies:

> New media technologies are no exception. They develop in dynamic environments where users, designers, manufacturers, investors, regulators, distributors and others work out their interrelated and competing interest, cultural assumptions, desires and visions. (p. 183)

Boczkowski (1999; 2004) calls this process a "mutual shaping" between technologies and users, combining the perspectives of diffusion of innovations theory, focusing on user adoption, and the social shaping of technology perspective, which focuses on the construction of new media technologies. Boczkowski argues (2004), "the shaping of artifacts should not be seen as disconnected from how their diffusion is intended to unfold and how it the shaping of artifacts should not be seen as disconnected from how their diffusion is intended to unfold and how it actually occurs, and their diffusion should not be examined in isolation from the process of technical construction that do not stop when artifacts are adopted" (p. 256).

Gatekeeping

Notions of "gatekeeping" have provided a significant framework for conceptualizing and theorizing how news is selected by journalists for consumers (White, 1950; Gieber, 1964; Reese and Ballinger, 2001; Shoemaker et al., 2008). David Manning White identified a news gatekeeper as a wire editor – " Mr. Gates" – whose subjective preferences and prejudices essentially controlled what news was included and excluded from the pages of the regional newspaper where he worked. Walter Gieber (1956) stressed the mechanical pressures and internal, organization influences that affected wire editors' news decisions. Warren Breed (1955) emphasized the role of publishers in setting policy that determined editors' and reporters' news decisions. Sociologist Herbert Gans (1979) identified gatekeeping within structures of power and professional norms inside news organizations as a whole, and transforming events into packages attractive to news consumers.

42

The rise of new technologies, however, led researchers to reconsider notions of

gatekeeping as first envisioned by White and Gieber and Gans (Singer et al, 2011).

Shoemaker et al (2008) wrote: "Gatekeeping … is no longer understood as solely a

matter of selection; nor is it understood as the action of a singular, powerful agent. A

broader understanding of gatekeeping has paved the way for gatekeeping scholarship to

be absorbed into the domain of media sociology (Schudson, 2003) and thus to regain

theoretical relevance."

Technological change with the Internet led some scholars to suggest that media

"gates" – as well as notions of media "gatekeeping"--are obsolete (Williams and Carpini,

2004; Quandt and Singer, 2009). In 2001 and again in 2006, Singer suggested that on the

web, journalists were giving up their gatekeeping roles and authority. She wrote: "Unlike

the print newspaper, the Web is not a finite, concrete media form; instead, its form is

simultaneously fluid and global and supremely individualistic" (2001, p. 78).

Axel Bruns (2003; 2005; 2008) posited that instead of "gatekeeping," the term

"gatewatching" was relevant in the world of the Internet and user-generated content:

> What has emerged as an alternative to gatekeeping is a form of reporting and
> commenting on the news which does not operate from a position of authority
> inherent in brand and imprint, in ownership and control of the newsflow, but
> works by harnessing the collective intelligence and knowledge of dedicated
> communities to filter the newsflow and to highlight and debate salient topics of
> importance to the community. (2008, p. 5)

This research investigates whether Bruns' "gatewatching" is applicable in this research of

users' habits and practices with the digital media offerings of Interstate General Media,

or, perhaps if traditional notions of "gatekeeping" dominate in this case.

Political Economy and Exploitation

While assessments of active audiences, aspects of agency, and technological features are critical in understanding the choices, interpretations, and uses of media content, a more complete understanding of the notion of the audience necessitates examination of how professional content producers regard their users. Researchers from a media-centric position have historically attempted to aggregate, quantify and categorize the audience as a market—sometimes quite literally in practical service to for-profit media industries. By virtue of its tight economic focus, and perhaps given its typical source of funding and disciplinary roots in marketing, the audience-as-market theory declines to encompass cultural elements of inquiry and normative expectations of the media in a deliberative democracy. The basic premise of the audience-as-market theory is that that the audience is an amalgamation of heterogeneous and dispersed *consumers*. Media organizations are then likely to group these consumers by volume, but also along social and economic lines in order to construct a commodity – a desirable group to be sold to advertisers. Audience-as-market theory is an economic construct largely from the view of financial benefit to media ownership. To this end, media institutions have a profound interest in *measuring* their audience, in order to determine both size, but also demography, upon which advertising rates are based. Quantitative measurements, therefore, are closely linked to the financial success of any media entity dependent on advertising revenue.

Setting aside a media-centric focus, Dallas Smythe (1981) proposed the then-innovative theory that television audiences perform *work* for advertisers by giving their time to the media, which in turn sell that labor to advertisers – economically exploiting the audience by profiting off of the surplus value that the audiences generate for free. And

while Smythe was focusing on entertainment shows on commercial television, it's worth

pointing out that most news "channels" or "media" in the U.S. are also dependent on

advertising. Although Smythe initiated his line of analysis nearly 40 years ago, it has

fresh applicability in the age of digital interactivity and user-generated content. New

technology permits a more detailed level of audience measurement, demographic

analysis, and individual behavior dissection than ever before – strengthening media's

ability to target, segregate and commodify specific audiences to advertisers' exact

interests.

Perhaps equally presciently, McLuhan wrote in 1964: "We have reached a …

point of data gathering where each stick of chewing gum we reach for is acutely noted by

some computer that translates our least gesture into a new probability curve or some

parameter of social science. Our private and corporate lives have become information

processes" (pp. 51-52). He further wrote that when "advertisers pay for space and time in

paper and magazine, on radio and TV … they buy a piece of the reader, listener or

viewer" (p. 207).

In the realm of audience commodification in the digital age, it is not chewing

gum, but mouse clicks, that are monitored and tracked. Jose van Dijck (2009) notes that

> The potential for niche marketing has been further enhanced in the Internet era;
> advanced digital technologies facilitate the tracking of individual social
> behaviour. The already close relationship between content producers, advertisers
> and consumers has become even more intimate (p. 47).

Christian Fuchs (2009, 2010) extends Smythe's concept to the world of Web 2.0, arguing

that productive users are sold as a commodity to advertisers:

> Capitalist produsage is an extreme form of exploitation of labour that the
> producers perform completely for free.… The category of produser commodity

45

does not signify a democratization of the media toward participatory systems, but the *total commodification* of human creativity. (2010, pp. 148-149)

Notions of audience exploitation emerge from these critical perspectives on the economic exchange between media and advertisers. They stand in sharp contrast to Toffler's age of "prosumption," which envisioned a realm of computing technology which fostered empowerment and liberation. Under this lens of examination, audiences' viewing patterns construct and provide highly-valuable *data* for media organizations. The audience members who created this metadata product have no power over how it is used or distributed, and get no monetary remuneration for their productive 'work.' In addition to the production of metadata, the culture of user-generated content literally puts audiences to work as creators of content (usually with zero compensation) to the financial benefit of the media organization (Fuchs, 2009; Bermejo, 2009). Van Dijck notes:

> The metadata *Google* harvests from UGC traffic and clickstreams is much more valuable to advertisers than the content users provide to these sites. Metadata are not merely a by-product of user-generated content: they are a prime resource for profiling real people with real interests. (2009, p. 49)

Bruns, who largely celebrates the creative potential of his "produser," does acknowledge a "sinister" undercurrent of possible exploitation: "[T]his 'cycle of wealth creation' benefits chiefly the commercial producers. … The prosumer is quite literally envisaged to assume the position of cheap, unskilled labour" (2010, p. 6).

Fuchs (2010), on the other hand, is unequivocal: "the category of produser commodity does not signify a democratization of the media toward participatory systems, but the total commodification of human creativity" (2010, pp. 148-149). PJ Rey (2012), meanwhile, writes that the exploitation in the realm of social media is not infinite: individuals do derive non-wage compensation/use-value from their work.

While scholars may make different analyses of degrees of exploitation, reducing the media-audience relationship to one of dollars is obviously a narrow perspective. It does not reflect a relationship of communication or ritual, nor does it attend to any normative expectations, like the role of media in a democracy. Furthermore, Smythe's audience has no shared identity – it is not a public with common interests, concerns or goals. His analysis is also unconcerned with the nature of media content. This theoretical approach is narrowly tailored, and should be understood as such. Nonetheless, its central conceptions remain valuable in the field of media study – especially in a capitalistic and digitized environment.

The Audience for News, and User Engagement

My examination of audiences and their activities thus far has been content-neutral, making no differentiations between audiences of entertainment content and audiences of news – categories, parenthetically, that are *not* mutually exclusive, as uses and gratifications research has identified entertainment as a motivator for news use (Yoo, 2011). The audience is not a fixed mass, but is rather formed and reformed across different content and channels – in other words, a member of this moment's entertainment audience also could choose to use news content.

Understanding that user's choices, motivations, social situation, and facets/degrees of media use are valuable in assessing interaction with both entertainment *and* news content. Many of the conceptions of audiences that were developed in the realm of entertainment content, such as uses and gratifications, are equally applicable in

the domain of news. Just as uses and gratifications may be used to analyze the news choices audiences make, reception studies show what audiences do with news content.

Mirca Madianou (2009) points to various reception studies that indicate news interpretation is shaped by similar factors as the interpretation of other kinds of content (class, demographic factors, beliefs, tastes, etc). Nonetheless, she says studies of news audiences have been somewhat limited, in comparison to research on journalism production and news content. John Palfrey (2006) hypothesizes that "digital natives" might use news in significantly different ways: grazing, deep dives, and participation in feedback loops. Mark Deuze (2009) offers a compelling prediction that news content will be increasingly based on the ability to allow interaction between users and journalists. These speculations and predictions, among others, are worthy of examination in the uses and gratifications tradition. In addition, given the normative expectations of professional journalism (including factual, timely, balanced, serving the public sphere, etc.), studies of news audiences could contribute a better understanding of the role the use and interpretation of news plays in creating informed communities, and how audiences' use of news equates to concepts of citizenship and the public sphere.

One way of conceptualizing the degree of a user's news use is a measurement of user engagement. User engagement with mobile news may be defined as sustained interest in mobile news content, where the format and nature of the presentation likely influence the degree of that interest. This connection between interest and environment has also been called "situational interest" (Yaros, 2006), in contrast to individuals' specific, more personal interests, which are established over time. (Yaros likens this to the interest a communications scholar would likely have in communications research

material prior to exposure in a communications-related study.) Because the mobile news environment utilizes different forms and interactive features than traditional print news, this intersection between environment and engagement is particularly useful in helping to understand what facilitates or hinders mobile news consumption.

Key concepts/aspects in understanding the realm of user engagement in the mobile news environment include: the form of news, the usability of content, the technological features offering various degrees of interactivity, knowledge of and adaptation to user habits, notions of credibility, and elements of enjoyment. It should be noted that these aspects are not mutually exclusive – instead, they are likely to overlap and share common features and, thus, methods of investigation.

The "form of news" – its structures, organization, and style of presentation – maps social worlds, according to Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone (2001). Within the pages of newspapers, this form has traditionally been governed by professional journalistic news values, the assertion of professional journalistic expertise, and the inherent limitations of space on a printed page. The printed newspaper – with its front page, topical sections and linear format– has been a classic form of news for more than 100 years (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001). But the technical features (and limitations) of mobile devices allow news providers an opportunity to break from traditional print-style presentation, should they chose to do so. Examinations of how newspapers adapted content and presentation to their PC-accessed Internet web sites initially showed little variation from the print product (Barnhurst 2010). In later years, the news form online was adapted to take advantage of the unlimited capacity for news on the homepage, but individual stories were displayed over multiple pages to incorporate greater quantities of

advertising. In addition, hyperlinks were used to direct traffic strictly within the site, an aspect of commercial control (Barnhurst, 2012). As mobile devices become increasingly prevalent in news consumption, it is important to attend to the form and presentation of news on these devices and how users engage (or decline to engage) with this form and related content. Perhaps the mobile form of news will echo the progression of Internet news form tracked by Barnhurst, or develop forms of presentation and monetizing strategies unique to mobile technologies.

The "form of news" attends to the literal presentation and design of news content, as well as notions of constructing social worlds and manifestations of professionalization, expertise, and economic rationalization. In contrast, the term "usability" focuses on the technical qualities of user interfaces. In other words, usability refers to the nature of the interaction between users and technology – i.e., whether a device, a piece of software, a website, an app, etc. is "user-friendly" (Nielsen & Budiu, 2012; Budiu & Nielsen, 2011). While technical in nature, the usability of a mobile app or mobile-optimized site likely has a powerful – and under-examined – influence on users' engagement with mobile news. In other words, if a mobile news app or mobile-optimized news site fails to work (or doesn't work the way a user intends), engagement is highly unlikely. To date, research in this area of mobile news has been extremely limited, and could benefit from more rigorous application of methodology. For example, Nielsen and Budiu's (2012) case study of the *Wall Street Journal*'s mobile App (a "design-review" conducted in 2011 – a sort of qualitative deep-dive by the researchers into the technological interfaces) found a highly confusing startup screen design that allowed existing subscribers to mistakenly believe they would have to begin a new mobile subscription and pay

additional fees to access content on the WSJ app. While these researchers did not

experimentally test the app with users, they did report that the WSJ app received very

poor rating from tens of thousands of customers who provided feedback in Apple's App

Store. Nielsen and Budiu's analysis, which they extend broadly to the category of all

newspaper apps, is that newspaper companies must 1) retain credibility with users, and 2)

deepen relationships with existing customers, who are already loyal subscribers. The

design flaws exhibited in the WSJ app, the authors posit, damaged the credibility of the

Wall Street Journal brand via App Store reviews and alienated existing customers.

However, rigorous research on the nexus between perceived news credibility and

usability remains important. [The authors note that the *Journal* effectively addressed

these usability problems in a 2012 app redesign, which improved the interface for both

existing subscribers and newcomers to the app. Indeed, a check on the Apple App Store

on Feb. 7, 2013 showed the present version achieved a 4 1/2 star rating (out of five) from

users.]

In a related study, Wooseob Jeong and Hyehung Han (2012) applied Nielsen's

usability heuristics to a study of 775 American newspaper mobile sites by examining the

initial screen shot displayed by an Apple iPod Touch and quantifying various aspects of

the design and content. Their analysis revealed some interesting anecdotes; for example,

nearly 60 percent of sites did not use timestamps on articles – a feature that likely is

important for users seeking timely news; and only 38 percent of sites had any sort of

weather information on the startup screen – news that might be timely, useful and

desirable for local news users). Nonetheless, the authors approached the question from

the field of technology studies, not journalism studies. In other words, their analysis

offered no insight into what news users may want/need, and what features and topics news that professionals privilege.

In journalism studies, much attention has been paid to new technological features of interactivity, and users' perceived desire for these options. For example, Deborah S. Chung (2008) suggests that online newspaper engagement may be assessed via opportunities for interactivity. Additional research has linked online newspaper engagement and user satisfaction with interactive features for personalization (Chung and Nah, 2009). In turn, personalized web content – that is, content tailored to the specific user, even if accomplished by the system as opposed to the user – can lead to greater positive attitudes (Kalyanaraman and Sundar, 2006). Yoo (2011) defines audience interactivity as "a feature-oriented construct reflecting online users' engagement with both the medium and other people in the media-use process" (p. 68) – and this definition of the term is helpful when considering the limited interactive features offered by IGM.

Inquiry into mobile engagement needs to examine whether the assumptions about interactivity generating engagement, as initially applied to the web accessed via the desktop or laptop, hold true on mobile devices. Mobile devices – particularly tablets – have been characterized in the popular press as "lean-back" devices. The term "lean-back" implies a more passive form of consumption, where a user sits, relaxes and reads; it is opposite of "lean-forward" devices such as a computers with keyboards that foster more interactive work. As technical features can frame and shape human practice in ways that are both enabling and constraining (Hutchby, 2001), the absence of traditional keyboards on most mobile devices limits opportunities for higher degrees of interactivity (such as prosumptive work). Interactive agency on mobile devices is relegated largely to

choice of content, or the ability to "share" fixed content with others. Pew's 2012 study

on mobile news incorporated interactivity exclusively through the narrow lens of sharing

news via social networks, and found that 35 percent of smartphone news users sometimes

share news content, and 32 percent of tablet news users sometimes share news content.

Research remains to be done in order to determine whether broader notions of

interactivity apply to mobile devices, and whether or not (or the degree to which) those

practices contribute to user engagement with news.

Interactivity via sharing or other means also falls under the rubric of user *habits* -

- that is, when, where, how and why do owners of mobile devices use them for news

content. The study of mobile user habits (and how news providers adapt their practices to

these habits), contributes to a holistic understanding of engagement. Study of the habit

and pleasure of news reading is not new (Madianou, 2008, summarizing Berelson, 1949),

and prior research – including much work in the uses and gratifications field – can inform

present inquiry. More recently, the Reynolds Journalism Institute survey (Fidler, 2012)

revealed that mobile tablet owners tended to use these devices for news after 5 p.m.

(seemingly important information for daily newspapers who simply shovel their print

content onto tablet apps each morning). Smartphones, meanwhile, continue to be the

most frequently owned mobile devices, and the most frequently used for news, with

usage more varied throughout the day (Fidler, 2012). Pew research (2012) indicates,

however, that the habit of attending to news just once a day (perhaps influence by habits

of reading the morning paper or tuning in to nightly newscasts) remains true for tablet

and smartphone owners, despite the notion that news is always available on mobile

devices: "The idea that people are turning to the news continually on their mobile devices has not emerged, at least not yet" (p. 13).

Pew research also examined the depth of news consumption on mobile devices, finding that owners of both tablets and smartphones heavily used their devices for headline-checking. However, nearly twice as many tablet news users regularly read lengthy articles on those devices, compared to smartphone news users (21 percent versus 11 percent). Of those tablet users who regularly read long articles, 78 percent of that subset read more than one long article in a sitting. These long-form readers, Pew additionally reports, tend to use regular, trusted sources of news and turn to these sources often.

Finally, the data accumulated by both Pew and the Reynolds Journalism Institute indicates that mobile news habits may be a complex interreliance on multiple mobile devices, alongside desktop digital delivery and traditional broadcast and print consumption. "Rather than replacing old technology, the introduction of new devices and formats is creating a new kind of "multi-platform" news consumer," Pew posits (2012, p. 3). In addition, Fidler reports that nearly 70 percent of mobile users regularly used two or more mobile devices. Mobile news habits, it appears, inform the understanding of engagement with particular mobile news sources and content, but also contribute to how users engage more broadly with news and journalism in all its forms.

Many of the aspects of engagement discussed thus far (usability, interactivity and habit) have broad applicability to a wide variety of mobile activity (email, gaming, social networking, shopping, etc.). Particular to journalism and news, however, are normative expectations of credibility. Credibility is generally viewed as a complex,

multidimensional concept. Thomas J. Johnson and Barbara K. Kaye (1998) defined credibility as users' evaluations of believability, fairness, accuracy and depth. Similarly, Andrew J. Flanagin and Miriam J. Metzger (2000) operationalized the term to include aspects of believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias and completeness.

Perceptions of news credibility have been previously been examined for users of desktop/laptop web-based news, and that work can inform new research on mobile news. For example, Mark A. Dochterman and Glen H. Stamp (2010) found that web users made judgments of credibility based on a variety of elements, including page layout, professionalism, timeliness, site motive, and site familiarity.

Rasha A. Abdullah et al. (2002, 2005) indicate that perceptions of credibility online may rely on subtly different factors than judgments of credibility in print. The authors reported that newspaper credibility was based on balance, honesty and currency, while online credibility was linked most to *source* trustworthiness, favoring branded web sites from legacy news organizations. Similarly, Andrew J. Flanagin and Miriam J. Metzger (2007), in an experiment involving registered voters and undergraduate communications students, found that news organization web sites were rated highest in credibility in comparison to identical content featured on e-commerce sites, special-interest group sites and personal web sites. In addition, these authors wrote, web site design and depth of content had a strong influence in perceived credibility.

The literature discussed here focuses on conventional desktop/laptop web-format news, and little research has been done examining the emerging practices on mobile devices, and how they affect users' judgments of credibility. However, the Pew data mentioned earlier – that readers of long-form articles tend to rely on regular, trusted

brands as sources of news – suggests that notions of news credibility on the web may be transferrable to mobile news.

Recent literature (Mitchell, 2012; Pew, 2012, 2013, 2014; Rainie, 2012) indicates that users access news on both tablets and smartphones, and that it is one of the most popular activities on these devices. Smartphones are the most prevalently-owned mobile device and ownership runs across multiple demographics. However, tablet ownership continues to increase as manufacturing competitors offer new and cheaper devices. This research also indicates that users of tablets are twice as likely to read long-form stories, and that they also read multiple long-form stories. While both tablets and smartphones are sites of mobile news use, this research indicates that the nature of news use may be device-specific: differences in screen-size, relative portability, and developing social practice may continue to yield significant differences in tablet vs. smartphone news use.

Finally, engagement with media and news content has been connected to notions of enjoyment, entertainment and satisfaction. Rachel Mersey, Edward Malthouse and Bobby Calder (2012, 2010) define engagement as the collective experiences that users have with a media *brand* and how it fits into their lives. Brand experiences are closely connected to customer satisfaction. In addition, entertainment is also one of the four general areas of newspaper reader experience set out by Denis McQuail (2010). I believe that aspects of enjoyment, entertainment and satisfaction are closely tied to notions of engagement, and research in this area frequently asks subjects to rate their news media experiences on Likert-scaled statements in order to assess the role of these variables.

Nabi and Krcmar (2004) conceptualized media enjoyment as an attitude, encompassing three dimensions: affective, cognitive and behavioral information. Nash

and Hoffman, (2009) further noted that the behavioral aspect is key when evaluating media use from the uses and gratifications approach, but has been overlooked as a predictor or motivator in past research. Although the literature linking news use and news enjoyment is limited, prior research has indicated that people who "enjoy keeping up with the news" like news content (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004). People who enjoy news also enjoy news exposure (Nash & Hoffman, 2009). Other research has shown that news enjoyment contributes to decreased feelings of news overload (York, 2013). Recent research has found that audiences still regard traditional media (television and newspapers) as more enjoyable than computers, tablets and smartphones (Chyi and Chadha, 2011). Aspects of news enjoyment among IGM digital subscribers will be incorporated into both phases of this mixed-method research.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to outline a framework of the theories and research literature regarding active audiences, the uses and gratifications framework, the sociological study of prosumption, media ecology, the diffusion of innovations and social construction of technology, notions of gatekeeping, and aspects of user engagement and enjoyment. Knitted together, these approaches form the basis for a user-centered inquiry into the mobile news habits and practices of the digital subscribers of Interstate General Media, the company that owns and publishes the legacy media newspapers *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the Philadelphia *Daily News.* This research is based on the theoretical foundation that these users are actively making media choices, and that their choices

reflect various motivations and gratifications sought. It is further influenced by the sociological study of prosumption, from the perspective that news users are (and always have been) simultaneously consuming and producing news, and that prosumptive news use may be further facilitated by technological features of digital interactivity. This research seeks to understand how these digital news users are adopting and employing news on newer mobile devices, and how aspects of engagement and enjoyment influence their news use. Finally, it considers the limitations on these digital users, within the available forms of news from IGM and the scant interactive features offered within the company's fleet of digital news websites and apps.

Chapter 3.
Methods

This study aims to analyze user engagement with the mobile news content offered by Interstate General Media (IGM) – the parent company of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* – with particular attention to news habits and practices, perceptions of prosumptive features, and aspects of engagement and enjoyment of mobile news. To that end, a mixed-methods approach – combining both quantitative survey data with qualitative semi-structured interviews of users – is well-suited to exploring both the nature and the nuances of user engagement with mobile news content. Data gathered from both phases of research will be examined for areas of convergence and the possibility of triangulation.

This chapter will first clarify the research questions, and then review the logic behind the selection of a mixed-methods approach. The explanatory, sequential nature of this design, and the attendant rationale, are reviewed next. Then, the population and sample; instrumentation; and procedure are outlined for each of the two phases of this project. Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief description of the integration – or "mixing" – of the data gathered from each stage of this research.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do users engage with mobile news?

How is mobile news used? What do users seek when they turn to mobile news?

What informs the choices users make, particularly when they are presented with

such a vast array of choices? Do perceptions of user enjoyment influence

engagement? Does familiarity and ease of use with technology influence mobile

news use?

RQ2: To what degree do digital news users exploit features of

prosumption/interactivity, and to what degree do these features satisfy the

expressed desires of users? Does interactivity influence engagement?

RQ3: How are traditional, normative aspects of professional journalism perceived

by users in the realm of mobile news?

RQ4: In what ways does the qualitative user interview data help contextualize

and/or explain the quantitative user survey results, and vice-versa? Are there

points of triangulation in the data?

Mixed Methods Approach

After collecting and analyzing 19 definitions provided by leading mixed methods

researchers, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) offered the following definition

in order to arrive at some sort of consensus on the meaning of the term: "Mixed methods

research is the type of research in which a researcher … combines elements of qualitative

and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints,

data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration" (p. 123). This is the definition I will adopt. I approach mixed methods research with the belief that it benefits from the best practices of the quantitative and qualitative traditions, and that the combined examination of numbers and narratives does not inherently conflict, but instead enriches the study and understanding of phenomena across a wide variety of disciplines. In other words, it can provide for a more comprehensive investigation and analysis.

Scholarship on well-planned mixed methods designs and the rigorous application of mixed methods data collection and analysis suggests that mixed methods research has several important benefits. First, it is thought that the combination of methods offsets the weaknesses of quantitative or qualitative approaches when used independently. For example, mixed methods can provide quantitative data with context, and gives voice to the participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). On the other hand, mixed methods may provide researchers with the ability to generalize qualitative findings (Jick, 1979). Taken together, the approach can help unpack complex phenomena (Mertens, 2003) or provide a more comprehensive understanding, because it enables researchers to employ a wide variety of research tools to collect data.

Finally, employing a mixed methods research design allows for the possibility of cross-validation, or "triangulation." Triangulation is a term used to indicate when the establishment of accuracy is attempted by using multiple forms of evidence: either in terms of using two or more sources of data, or (in the case of mixed methods) by using two or more methods from the fields of qualitative and quantitative inquiry (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Validity is enhanced when data derived from different methods suggests

the same conclusions, allowing for greater confidence in the results. On the other hand, if there is limited or no convergence in the results, it may lead to the reformulation of existing theories, or the construction of new theory. Creswell and Plano (2007) note, however, that if the results do not agree, this can be particularly difficult for researchers to interpret and may require additional data collection. Nonetheless, the possibility of triangulation to enhance validity is an important aspect of the benefits of employing a mixed method research design.

While the study of education, health and medicine, and organizations seem to have particularly benefitted from the use of mixed methods research, it has been used infrequently in the fields of mass communication and journalism studies (Robinson & Mendelson, 2012). Trumbo (2004) reported that scholarship published in a set of eight peer-review mass communication journals during the 1990s rarely mixed qualitative and quantitative methods – only 2 percent of articles published between 1990 and 2000 were mixed methods (by comparison, 57 percent of the total articles were quantitative, and the remaining 41 percent were qualitative). Pablo J. Boczkowski and colleagues (Siles & Boczkowski, 2012; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2010) call on media and journalism researchers to conduct more mixed methods research. Existing scholarship, they write, is limited by tendencies to focus on segmented phenomena, and application of just a single set of evidence-collection tools. "By utilizing various methods, employing multiple data sources, and drawing on a variety of theoretical approaches, mixed-method studies should afford key opportunities for triangulation of various sorts and conducting more robust and comprehensive analyses," Siles and Boczkowski (2012, p. 26) wrote in specific application to scholarly analysis of the "newspaper crisis." However, this logic

can and should be extended to other facets of journalism studies as well. Mixed methods research offers both journalism scholars and journalism organizations a comprehensive approach to understanding complex phenomena, particularly at a time of industry change and technological innovation, and is well-suited to inquiry within this field. For these reasons, I employed a mixed-methods approach in this research.

As Boczkowski points out, scholarship can be limited if it focuses only on a single segment of a wider phenomenon, and if it only employs a single set of methodological tools. I believe mobile news users must be studied and understood in the context of the technologies these users employ and their features (just as technologies must be understood via the social practices of adoption and use). An investigation of mobile news users would benefit from both qualitative and quantitative evidence and analysis, as detailed below.

Design

This research uses an explanatory, multi-phase mixed method to examine user engagement with the mobile news offerings of Interstate General Media, the owner of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*. First, the researcher conducted an online quantitative survey of current and former IGM digital subscribers. This data was subsequently enriched by qualitative telephone interviews with individual users in order to provide additional information, context, and the user's voice. Together, the evidence yields a contextualized understanding of the habits, practices, and desires of

mobile news users, given the mobile content and interactive features provided by a traditional, metropolitan newspaper organization.

I believe that mobile news engagement is best approached under the existing framework of audience studies and recent online audience studies, and the variables examined under these theoretical lenses. To treat mobile news engagement as completely new and unique ignores the threads of continuity in social practices (particularly in light of theories of the diffusion of innovations), and suggests technological determinism. For that reason, I embrace the "explanatory" design within mixed methods approaches, as defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007).

Mixed methods research has also been categorized as either simultaneous or sequential (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003), where the qualitative and quantitative aspects are either conducted at the same time, or where the results of the first method inform the data collection of the second, subsequent method. These authors note that where quantitative data is the first to be collected, the researcher's goal is to first test variables among a large sample, and then undertake an in-depth exploration with a few cases via qualitative inquiry. Integration of data within this research design likely occurs at the interpretation phase of the study. I employed the sequential design in this research, and the data was integrated at the final, interpretive stage.

Population and Sample – Phase I

For the first stage of this mixed methods research, IGM provided email addresses for its current digital subscribers (who used the content more than twice as of February 2014),

as well as former digital subscribers. In all, 49,923 current subscribers and 978 former

subscribers were asked to take the online survey via an email solicitation from the

researcher. The email linked directly to the instrument, with technological controls in

place so that responses could be logged only once from each device. A $10 gift card

incentive was offered to the first 600 participants, in order to achieve a confidence level

of 95 percent, and a margin of error of four percent. The online survey was discontinued

after 600 participants qualified for the incentive.

Instrumentation – Phase I

The 51-question survey (Appendix A) was conducted via Qualtrics, the online

survey software available to University of Maryland researchers. The survey included

questions regarding which digital devices participants owned, and which was their

singular main device for checking news. The instrument also asked which IGM digital

news sources participants used, which was their <u>main</u> IGM digital source; how often and

for what period of time do the users use IGM digital news; and what IGM topics did they

read – and read <u>most</u> – during the past week. The instrument also measured which digital

news features (print-like experience; most recent news; audio, video and graphical

components; opportunities to share via email or social media) were important to

participants.

The development of the online survey was further informed by the literature –

particularly prior research instruments which have previously demonstrated high internal

validity. For construction these specific items in my proposed survey, I relied on (and,

in some cases slightly adapted) these scales. In order to measure engagement, the instrument used six Likert-scale questions, drawn from Ruggiero (2000). In order to measure enjoyment, the instrument used seven Likert-scale questions, drawn from the interest/enjoyment portion of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (Ryan, 1982). In order to measure participants' ease of use and familiarity with technology, the instrument used six Likert-scale questions, drawn from Sundar and Marathe's "power user scale" (2010).

Additionally, my survey drew on selected news habits and demographic questions from Pew Research (Mitchell, Rosenstiel, Santhanam, & Christian, 2012; Pew Research Center for People and the Press survey, 2007). At its conclusion, the instrument included eight multiple choice and open-ended questions about gender, age, race, highest level of education reached, annual income, zip code, and whether or not the participant received home delivery of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and/or the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

Finally, for survey participants who indicated they were former subscribers of IGM digital products, the survey instrument directly led them to an open-ended question: "Briefly tell us why you no longer use or subscribe to The Philadelphia Inquirer's or the Philadelphia Daily News' digital products. Please be specific, and state which product you stopped using and why."

Procedure – Phase I

Email solicitations to participate in the survey were sent by the researcher via listservs to current and former IGM digital subscribers on Wednesday, March 5, 2014. The recruitment email contained a link to the online survey. Prospective participants were

informed that the research was being conducted by a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, in cooperation with *The Philadelphia Inquirer.* As an incentive, prospective participants were told that the first 600 individuals to complete the online survey would receive a $10 Inquirer Rewards Card – a gift card that could be used at Walmart, Target, Barnes and Noble, Subway, or Dunkin Donuts. Interstate General Media, the parent company of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* generously funded the incentive for the survey portion of the research. In exchange for providing the gift cards and making their databases of current and former subscribers' email addresses available to the researcher, members of IGM's marketing department viewed the proposed survey in advance. In addition, the researcher provided IGM with the anonymous raw survey data collected, and the researcher's data analysis. This dissertation, upon completion, will also be provided to IGM.

Before beginning the survey questions, participants who followed the email survey link were first directed to the Institutional Review Board [IRB] consent form for their electronic signature. The IRB consent form indicated that only the researcher would have access to the survey data that included participants' identities, and that their identities would not be contained in any written report. Once the IRB document was electronically signed, participants were able to proceed to the online survey questions. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were thanked and asked to enter their name and mailing address in order to receive the $10 Inquirer Rewards gift card. When 600 names and addresses were collected, the online survey link became inactive and no further responses were allowed. This occurred on Thursday, March 6, slightly more than 24 hours after the survey was activated. In all 632 complete survey responses were recorded

(the additional 32 participants either indicated they did not want a gift card, or did not fully complete the name and address portion of the gift-card fulfillment section). Demographic data about the survey participants is reported in chapter 4.

Upon conclusion of the data collection, the quantitative results were analyzed using SPSS software to examine means, standard deviations, correlations, frequencies, and other statistics. Responses to open-ended questions were coded and grouped by theme. These results are discussed in the fourth chapter, and the findings of this phase were then used to formulate the questions posed to participants in the subsequent, semi-structured interview phase of this research.

Population and Sample – Phase II

This research targets a select population of users of specific content – the current and former digital subscribers of IGM. Therefore, the qualitative sample for semi-structured telephone interviews was drawn from the initial online survey participants. Mixed methods purposive sampling can and often does use multiple techniques (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) in order to establish which cases to qualitatively examine. The most relevant for my research purposes were typical case samples and outlier samples, as these would address both the most-common results in contrast with extreme ones, in order to further understanding of mobile news use. Because this research sought to compare mobile news users with desktop/laptop news users, participants from each of these categories were chosen. For the same comparative purposes, both power users (those with the most at ease with technology) and nonpower users were chosen (Sundar and Marathe, 2010). In

addition, mixed methods researchers can incorporate homogeneous sampling if there is a particular population subset worthy of further examination. Because of the mean age of survey participants (55.5 years), the researcher was particularly interested if younger participants would yield suggesting unique or different use or engagement with mobile news. The researcher's goal was to conduct at least 30 interviews (Morse, 2012), in order to contextualize the survey data and seek areas of triangulation.

Finally, the quantitative survey data yielded responses from 41 former IGM digital subscribers, the majority of whom cited issues including cost, lack of time to read, that they had moved from the area. However, six former subscribers wrote that they chose to use free online news content instead of continuing to pay IGM. Six others indicated they were disappointed with the quality of IGM digital content, and two more indicated they had difficulty navigating IGM's digital offerings. These 14 survey participants were each solicited twice via email to participate in a telephone interview. Unfortunately, all declined.

Instrument – Phase II

Following the mixed method sequential explanatory design rubric, the quantitative data from the online survey was used to establish the topics and questions for the semi-structured telephone interview portion of the research (Appendix B). The researcher identified aspects and issues detected in the quantitative phase that would benefit from further explanation and contextualization during the qualitative phase. Using a preliminary phase of investigation to develop or refine an instrument is a design/strategy

commonly found in mixed methods inquiry – researchers can identify variables, and/or develop themes which can be translated into scales or items on a questionnaire (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). In this project, the qualitative instrument was developed at the conclusion of Phase I data collection and analysis. At this point, the researcher selected topics for interviews and constructed a list of questions, which served as an interview guide (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). These telephone interviews were semi-structured, because the specific questions posed to each interview participant were drawn from their individual responses to the online survey conducted previously by the researcher, in order to obtain context and depth of understanding of their survey responses. Additionally, follow-up questions were posed during the telephone interviews as needed, to fully understand participants' verbal answers.

In order to understand each participant's choice of device for news use, participants were asked why they chose that device, and what features of the device made it their choice. They were also asked if there was anything they did not like about getting news on the device of their choice.

To further explore news habits, participants were asked about their IGM digital source of choice, and why that was their preference, and what features of their choice appealed to them (most recent news; print-like experience, etc., drawn from the survey data). Furthermore, participants were asked to "describe your habits – do you check these news sites at a specific time each day, or from a specific location, or during a specific event in your day?" Participants were asked to describe how they navigate through the digital content – where to they start with the IGM digital offering of their

choice, and how do they move through the content. They were also asked which sections

or topics they read the most, and what sort of stories from those sections appealed to

them.

In order to understand individual use or disuse of interactive, prosumptive

features, interview participants were asked if they had ever shared IGM news content via

email or social media, and if so, what general prompted them to do so. Or, if they were

unlikely to share news content, why not? Furthermore, in order to probe their interest or

disinterest in creating news content for IGM (a feature not presently allowed on IGM

news offerings), participants were asked: "Why did you previously indicate that you were

likely/unlikely to post your own news stories, photos or video if offered the opportunity?"

To gain understanding of participants' views on normative aspects or journalism,

all interviewees were asked: "How do you define news? What is news to you?" They

were subsequently asked if IGM news content fulfilled their expectations of credibility,

trustworthiness, balance, objectivity and accuracy, and were asked to explain their

responses.

Finally, in order to ascertain whether the interviewee had longstanding newspaper

habits, participants were asked if they had grown up in a home with delivery of *The

Philadelphia Inquirer,* the *Philadelphia Daily News,* or another newspaper. They were

also asked how long they subscribed to delivery of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* or the

Philadelphia Daily News (digital and/or print, if applicable).

Procedure – Phase II

Potential interview participants were selected via purposive sampling, and solicited by a personal email from the researcher, sent in late May or early June 2014. The recruitment email thanked individuals for their prior participation in the online survey, and explained that the researcher was seeking to interview 30 individuals by telephone in order to more fully understand the survey responses. As an incentive, prospective participants were told that three $25 Target gift certificates would be awarded via lottery among the 30 participants, and that those gift cards were offered directly from the researcher, a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland. Individuals interested were asked to send an email reply to the researcher, in order to set up a mutually convenient time. Some participants received secondary, follow-up recruitment emails if they did not respond to the first appeal. Recruitment emails were sent to 139 individuals, and 30 agreed to participate in telephone interviews. Once a mutually-convenient date and time was arranged, these 30 participants were directed to an online consent from approved by IRB. The consent form indicated that the telephone interviews would be recorded for the purposes of transcription, and that the recordings and that their identities would be available only to the researcher. Demographic data about the interview participants is reported in chapter 5.

All telephone interviews were conducted in late May and early June 2014, after IRB forms were electronically signed. The interviews were subsequently transcribed by the researcher. Individual transcripts were identified by numeric codes, so that participants' names did not appear on transcription documents in order to maintain anonymity.

In order to analyze the qualitative data, the researcher used a thematic content analysis approach to the interview transcripts. In some cases, when a theme occurred repeatedly across the span of several interviews, or if it only emerged once or twice, the researcher quantified the theme and noted it in the results. The content of the transcripts were also examined for concepts and patterns among responses, and with an eye as to how the content addressed the research questions and provided context to explicate the quantitative data. Interview transcripts were coded by the researcher, and themes were subsequently grouped together and analyzed. These results are further discussed in the fifth chapter.

Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Finally, the data from both quantitative and qualitative phases are "mixed" or integrated, which Janice M. Morse (2012) calls "the point of interface" in mixed methods research. At this stage, the researcher examined the data for areas of convergence, as well as divergence. Areas of triangulation between the phases were identified, in order to enhance validity. In addition, the qualitative narrative was used to expand, explain, and contextualize the quantitative results. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) wrote that mixed methods validity stems from "the ability of the researcher to draw meaningful and accurate conclusions from all the data in the study" (p. 146). This notion was central to data integration and analysis in this research, and the results are discussed in the sixth chapter.

Chapter 4.
Quantitative Results

The online survey was administered over the course of Wednesday, March 5 and Thursday, March 6, 2014 to current and former digital subscribers. The dates were two midweek, typical news days with no exceptional news events appearing in the various digital publications included in this research. At the conclusion, 632 complete responses were recorded, yielding a margin of error of four percent.

This chapter will begin with an overview of the general demographics of participants, their ownership of digital devices and their self-reported ease of use with technology. It will also review their general digital news preferences and habits. Next, the results will examine different results for mobile news users (those who primarily turn to a tablet or smartphone for news) versus results for participants who primarily used desktop or laptop computers for news. Then, this chapter will review measures of engagement with mobile news, and separate measures of enjoyment of mobile news. Participants' views on the interactive/prosumptive features of IGM digital news sites (limited to sharing content via email or social media) and leaving comments on news articles will be explored, as well as their interest in contributing news content, such as photos or articles, which is not presently allowed on IGM sites. Finally, this chapter will conclude with the results from former IGM digital subscribers, and they reasons they offered for discontinuing their digital subscriptions.

Overview of the Participants

Of the 632 respondents who completed the online survey, 344 were men (54 percent); 288 were women (46 percent). Nearly half of all participants were ages 50 to 64 (M = 55.5, SD = 11.8), and participation by age group is reflected in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Frequencies of survey participants, grouped by age.
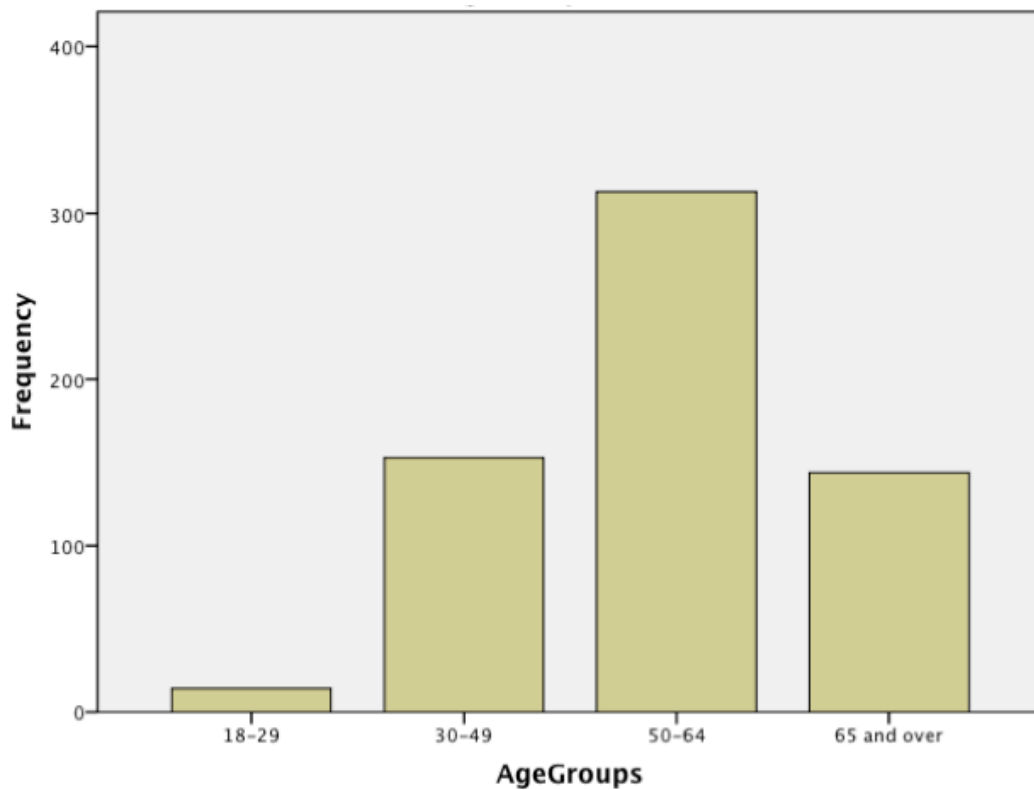
Of the 626 respondents who indicated their race, 597 – or 95 percent – self-identified as "white." The group was also well-educated and relatively affluent: 532 respondents (84 percent) indicated they received a bachelor's degree or higher, and an additional 79 (13 percent) indicated they had some college education. In terms of annual income, 350 respondents (55 percent) indicated they earned $75,000 or more annually.

Another sign of affluence is the degree of ownership of multiple digital devices: 604 (96 percent) own a desktop or laptop computer; 495 (78 percent) own a smartphone; 443 (70 percent) own a tablet. This is substantially higher than national ownership – Pew reported in January 2014 that 42 percent of American adults own tablets (Zickuhr & Rainie, 2014). Another 2014 Pew report indicated that 58 percent of American adults own a smartphone (Pew Internet Research, 2014). In 2010, the most recent year Pew published desktop and laptop ownership statistics, 76 percent of Americans owned either a desktop or laptop computer (Smith, 2010).

Despite this extensive device ownership, relative affluence and high educational levels, participants only moderately rated their ease of use of technology. The category of "power users" was determined after dichotomizing the median score from previously tested indicators (Sundar and Marathe, 2010). The six items asked participants to indicate their level of knowledge, comfort, and desire to engage with new technologies.

These six items, which produced a Cronbach's alpha of .89 for this study, ranged from 1.0 to 10.0 and resulted in a mean score of 5.4 on the 10-point Likert scale, indicating that participants self-reported moderate comfort, ease and desire to engage with new technologies. (By point of comparison, Sundar and Marathe achieved a mean score of 6.85 from a sample of undergraduate communication majors in 2010; Incollingo and Yaros (2013) achieved a relatively high mean score of 7.4 in a 2012 sample of undergraduates enrolled in introductory journalism courses. Given the age differences between participants in this survey, and prior research involving college-age students, this difference is not unexpected.).

Nonetheless, although these participants report only moderate comfort and ease with new technologies, in their answers to other survey questions they report substantial daily use of digital technology to keep up with the news. Out of all participants, 491 (77.7 percent) daily use a laptop or desktop computer to check headlines, and 356 (56.3 percent) daily read "in-depth articles" on these devices. On tablets, 298 (47.2 percent) reported checking headlines daily, and 221 (35 percent) reported reading in-depth articles. On smartphones, 302 (47.8 percent) participants reported checking headlines daily, while 130 (20.6 percent) reported reading in-depth articles.

In choosing to get news on digital devices, 60 percent of participants said that getting the most recent news or news updates was most important to them, while 36 percent responded that "a traditional 'print-like' experience" was most important. Of substantially less interest were news components with audio, video or other graphical features (2 percent), opportunities to share news via email or social media (2 percent), and opportunities to leave comments (1 percent).

Participants also reported differences in the amount of time they spent reading/using digital news from digital sources provided by *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* the *Philadelphia Daily News* and philly.com – all produced by parent company Interstate General Media (IGM). On weekdays, a majority of all respondents –355, or 57 percent – reported spending more than 20 minutes on these IGM digital sites, and 138 participants (22.1 percent) reported spending between 46 and 60 minutes on these IGM news sites (Table 1, Chart 2).

Table 1: Frequencies of time spent on IGM news sites on weekdays.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 minutes	41	6.5	6.6	6.6
	1 to 9 minutes	58	9.2	9.3	15.9
	10 to 15 minutes	114	18.0	18.3	34.1
	16 to 20 minutes	56	8.9	9.0	43.1
	21 to 30 minutes	126	19.9	20.2	63.3
	31 to 45 minutes	32	5.1	5.1	68.4
	46 to 60 minutes	138	21.8	22.1	90.5
	61 to 90 minutes	20	3.2	3.2	93.8
	more than 90 minutes	39	6.2	6.3	100.0
	Total	624	98.7	100.0	
Missing		8	1.3		
Total		632	100.0		

Chart 2: Frequencies of time spent on IGM news sites on weekdays.

78
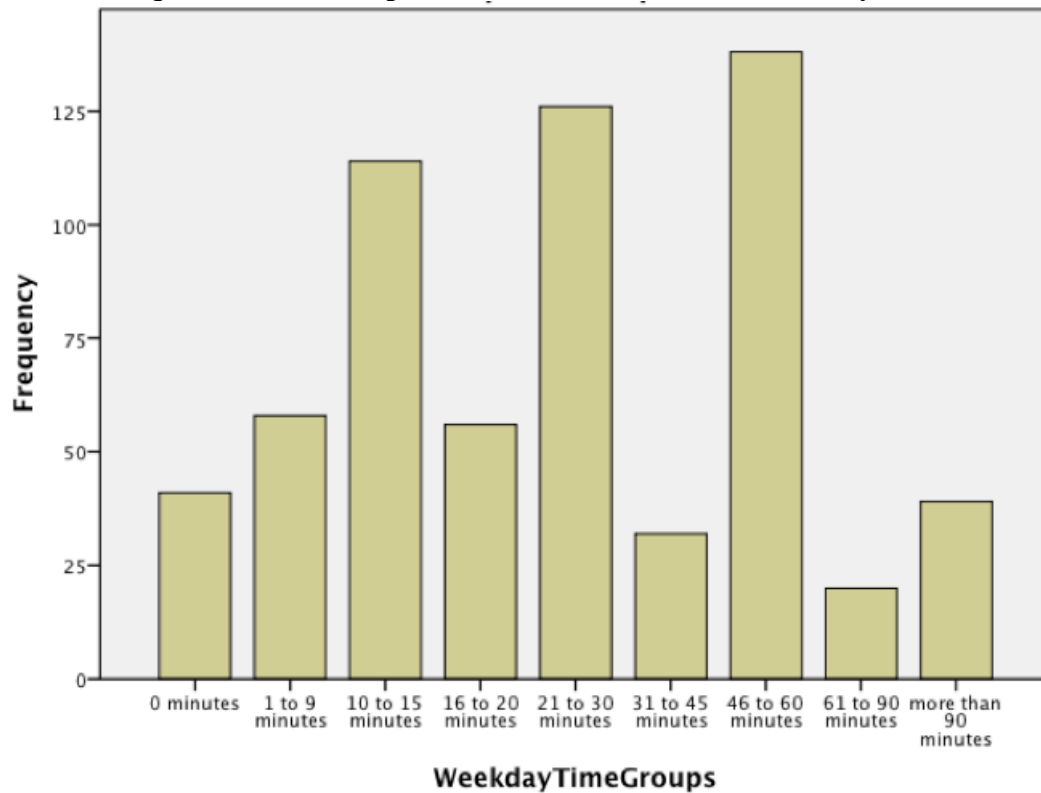
On weekends, participants' reports of time spent reading/using IGM's digital news was more varied: 319 participant (51.1 percent) reported using these sites 20 minutes or less per weekend day. However, it is important to note that of the 132 participants who indicated zero minutes of time on weekends, 28 individuals (21.2 percent of this subgroup) noted that they do not use the digital sites on weekends because they prefer to read the printed newspaper on Saturday and/or Sunday (Table 2 and Chart 3).

Table 2: Frequencies of time spent on IGM news sites on weekend days.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 minutes	132	20.9	21.2	21.2
	1 to 9 minutes	61	9.7	9.8	30.9
	10 to 15 minutes	97	15.3	15.5	46.5
	16 to 20 minutes	29	4.6	4.6	51.1
	21 to 30 minutes	120	19.0	19.2	70.4
	31 to 45 minutes	33	5.2	5.3	75.6
	46 to 60 minutes	96	15.2	15.4	91.0
	61 to 90 minutes	18	2.8	2.9	93.9
	more than 90 minutes	38	6.0	6.1	100.0
	Total	624	98.7	100.0	
Missing		8	1.3		
Total		632	100.0		

Chart 3: Frequencies of time spent on IGM news sites on weekend days.
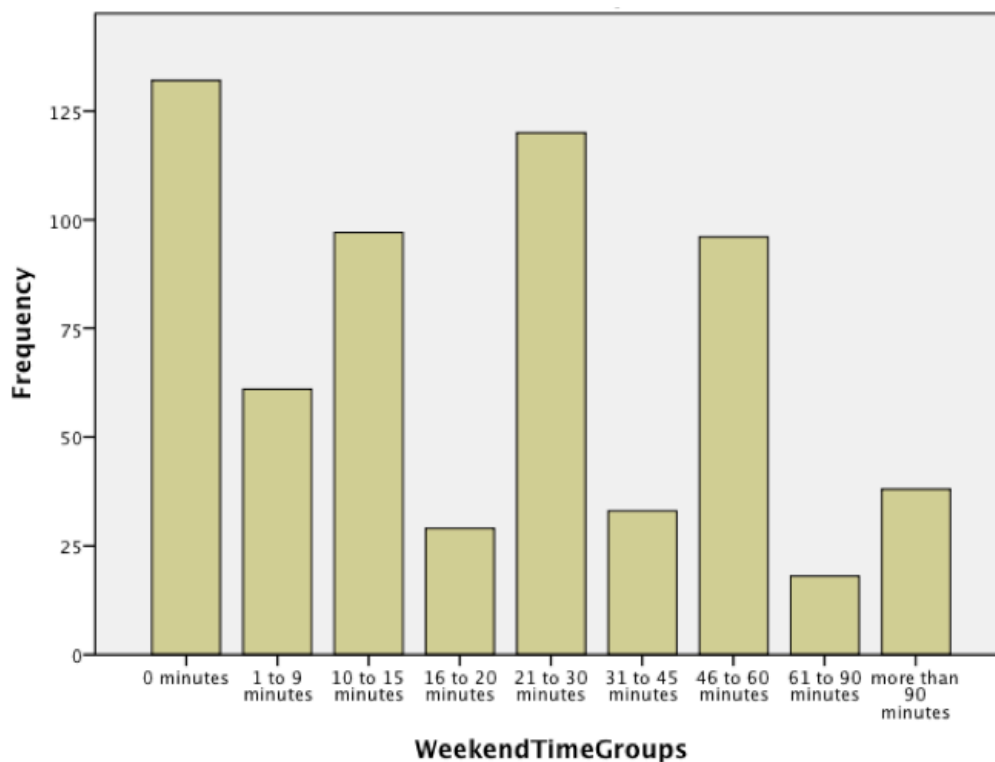
Additionally, 335 participants (53 percent) reported that they receive home delivery of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* seven days a week, and an additional 204 (32 percent) have just the Sunday paper delivered to their homes. Forty-four respondents (7 percent) indicated they receive home delivery of the Philadelphia Daily News. Just 92 participants (15 percent) were digital-only subscribers, indicating they did not receive any printed IGM newspaper via home delivery.

Finally, participants were asked which topic they read about most via IGM digital news. The largest group, comprising 38 percent of participants reported reading local news most; 24 percent reported reading U.S. and world news most; 21 percent reported

reading sports news most; 9 percent reported reading sections entitled "Lifestyle, Health,

Arts and Entertainment, Features" most; 4 percent reported reading business news most;

and another 4 percent reported reading opinion most (Chart 4).

Chart 4: Frequencies of topics read about most via IGM digital news.
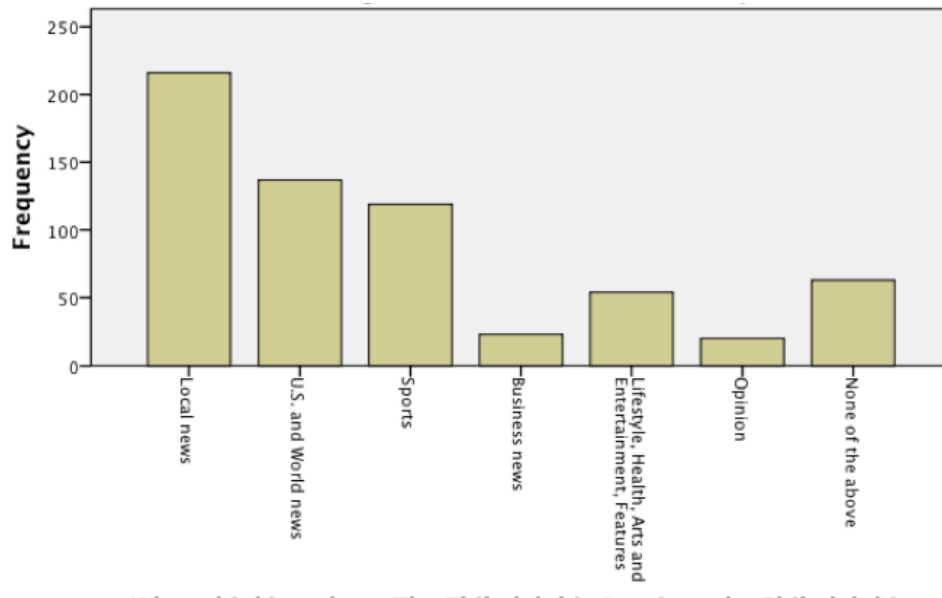
The Mobile News User

The first research question seeks to explore how users engage with mobile news; how do

perceptions of user enjoyment influence engagement; and does familiarity and ease of use

with technology influence mobile news use.

In order to drill down to mobile users -- participants who indicated that a tablet or

smartphone was their <u>main</u> device for checking or reading news – the number of mainly-

tablet users (n=186) was added to mainly-smartphone users (n=89). That yielded 275

participants, or 44 percent of the initial sample, isolating them from the 357 participants

(56 percent) who indicated that a desktop or laptop was their main device for checking or

reading news.

As a group, "mobile users" reported that they used philly.com, the Inquirer's

digital editions – both as an APP or on the website, and the inquirer.com website. Mobile

users indicated their MAIN source from IGM was the Inquirer's replica edition APP

which reproduces each day's printed newspaper, page by page, on the device screen

(Table 3 and Chart 5).

Table 3: Main digital source of news for Mobile Users.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	inquirer.com website	34	12.4	12.4	12.4
	inquirer.com's digital newspaper replica on the website	54	19.6	19.6	32.0
	phillydailynews.com	1	.4	.4	32.4
	philly.com	62	22.5	22.5	54.9
	The Philadelphia Inquirer APP	25	9.1	9.1	64.0
	The Philadelphia Inquirer, Digital Edition (replica newspaper) APP	92	33.5	33.5	97.5
	The Philadelphia Daily News APP	1	.4	.4	97.8
	philly.com APP	6	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Chart 5: Frequencies of main digital source of news for Mobile Users.
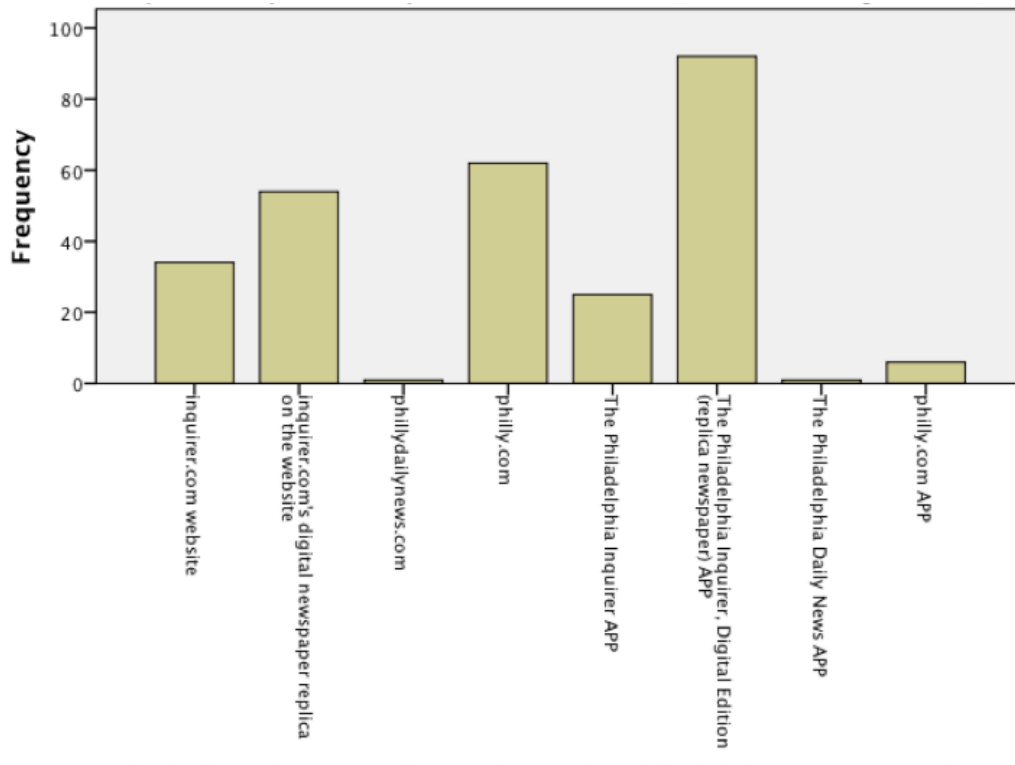
This differs from the desktop/laptop computer users, who (not surprisingly) reported low APP use, and said they used philly.com, the Inquirer's digital replica newspaper on the website, and the inquirer.com site. These users most favored philly.com as their main source (Table 4 and Chart 6).

Table 4: Main digital source of news for Computer/Desktop Users.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	inquirer.com website	71	19.9	19.9	19.9
	inquirer.com's digital newspaper replica on the website	109	30.5	30.5	50.4
	phillydailynews.com	2	.6	.6	51.0
	philly.com	118	33.1	33.1	84.0
	The Philadelphia Inquirer APP	8	2.2	2.2	86.3
	The Philadelphia Inquirer, Digital Edition (replica newspaper) APP	42	11.8	11.8	98.0
	The Philadelphia Daily News APP	1	.3	.3	98.3
	philly.com APP	6	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	357	100.0	100.0	

Chart 6: Frequencies of main digital source of news for Computer/Desktop Users.
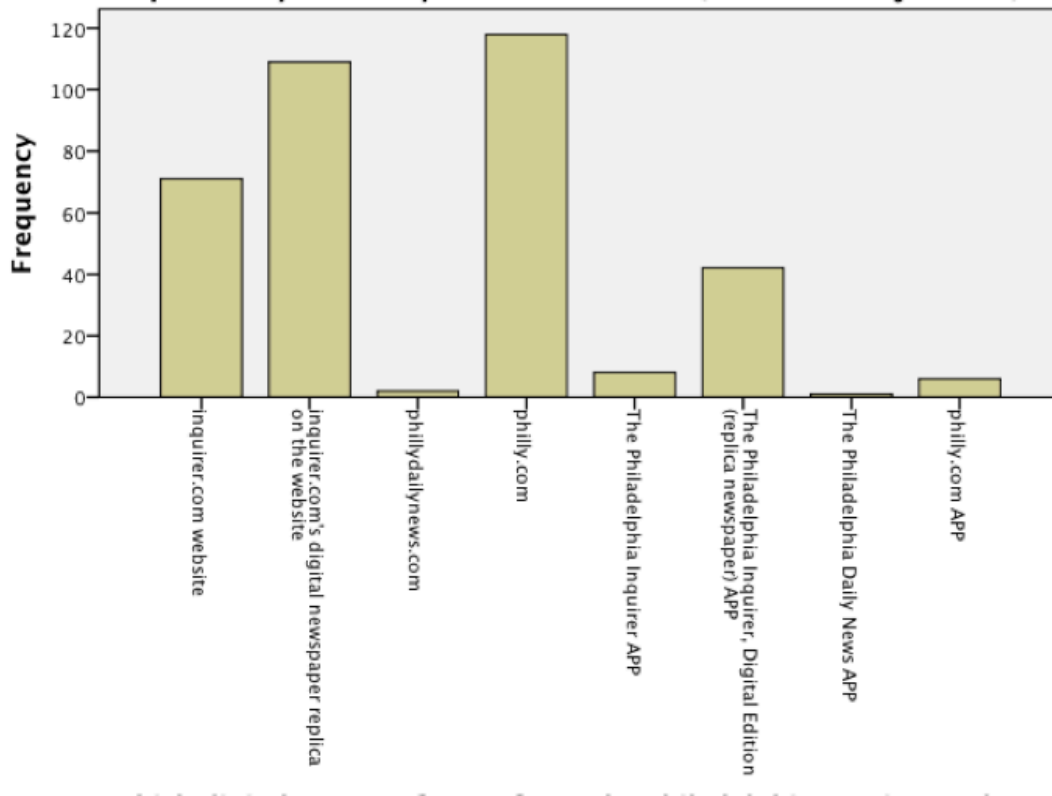
Timeliness is a normative aspect of professional journalism. While both 'Mobile Users' and 'Desktop/Laptop Users' most highly valued the "most recent news or updates" in digital news, both also highly valued "a traditional, 'print-like' experience," which may, in part, explain preferences for digital replicas. However, the high prioritization of "most recent news" and "a traditional, 'print-like' experience" is a somewhat incongruous outcome, because the replica editions are static and do not feature or prioritize news updates throughout the day (Table 5 and Chart 7).

Preferences for replica editions and "a traditional, 'print-like' experience may also reflect the age of participants (mean age 55.5 of entire sample; mean age 54.4 for mobile

users; mean age 56.4 for desktop/laptop users) who likely have been accustomed to receiving news in a traditional, pre-Internet printed form. Notably, while age and main digital source did not produce any statistically significant correlations, only one of the 14 total survey respondents who were age 29 and younger chose a replica-format as their main news source. Furthermore, of these 14 respondents, 78 percent (n=11) most valued timely news, while 21 percent (n=3) most valued the traditional, print-like experience. Meanwhile, 39 percent (n=178) of all participants age 50 and older most valued the traditional, print-like experience.

Table 5: What is most important to mobile users when getting digital news.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A traditional "print-like" experience	108	39.3	39.3	39.3
	Most recent news or news updates	153	55.6	55.6	94.9
	Components with audio, video or other graphical features	6	2.2	2.2	97.1
	Opportunities to share content via email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1	6	2.2	2.2	99.3
	Opportunities to leave comments	2	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	275	100.0	100.0	

Chart 7: Frequencies of what is most important to mobile users when getting digital news.
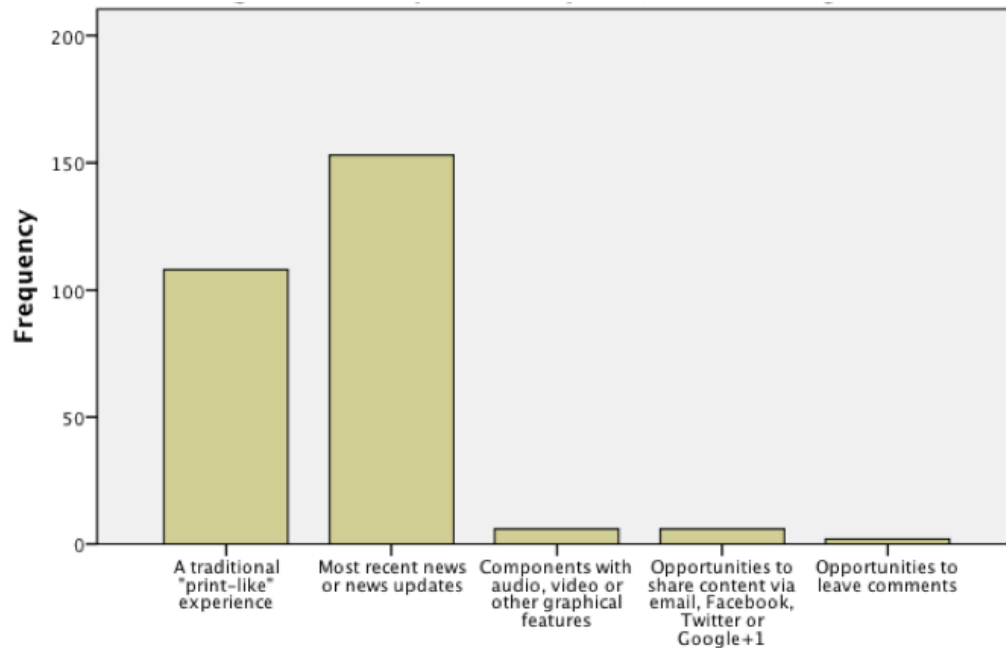
When it comes to checking headlines and reading articles, mobile users and desktop/laptop users report consistent patterns in daily news use of checking headlines and reading in-depth articles, although in-depth reading – as expected – is less common on smartphone devices than on tablets or desktop/laptop computers (66 percent both on a tablet and desktop/laptop, versus 37 percent on a smartphone). In addition, mobile users report most reading the same news categories as the overall sample, with local news leading (39 percent), followed by U.S. and word news (23 percent) and sports (20 percent).

Engagement with Mobile News

When it comes to engagement, mobile users reported higher levels than desktop/laptop

users across all six items in the survey. These six items, on a seven-point Likert scale, produced a Cronbach's alpha of .87 for this study.

Five of the six measures produced statistically significant differences:

Table 6: Engagement measures producing statistically significant differences.

	Mobile Users	Desktop/Laptop Users
USEFUL	M=5.63, SD=1.28	M=5.36, SD=1.40
ENTERTAINING	M=5.17, SD=1.30	M=4.75, SD=1.40
ENJOYABLE	M=5.23, SD=1.37	M=4.78, SD=1.57
CONVENIENT	M=5.34, SD=1.45	M=5.01, SD=1.64
DESIRE TO DISCUSS CONTENT WITH OTHERS	M=4.73, SD=1.66	M=4.38, SD=1.71

Paired samples t-tests (using a subset of 275 desktop/laptop users randomly selected via SPSS to equal the number of mobile users) indicated that these differences were statistically significant:

- USEFUL ($t = 2.678$, df $= 548$, $p = .008$, two–tailed)

- ENTERTAINING ($t = 4.111$, df $= 548$, $p = .000$, two–tailed)

- ENJOYABLE ($t = 3.982$, df $= 548$, $p = .000$, two–tailed)

- CONVENIENT ($t = 2.787$, df $= 548$, $p = .006$, two–tailed)

- DESIRE TO DISCUSS ($t = 3.061$, df $= 548$, $p = .002$, two–tailed)

The only engagement measure that did not produce statistically significant differences between mobile users and desktop/laptop users was the desire to share content via email or social media ($t = 1.568$, df $= 548$, $p = .117$, two–tailed). Both groups

indicated little desire to share the content – yielding the lowest mean scores within the engagement items: mobile users (M=3.77, SD=1.95) and for desktop/laptop users (M=3.63, SD=1.90) on the 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "no desire to share." This relative lack of desire to share will be discussed below, in the section devoted to the second research question regarding notions of prosumption and interactivity.

Despite the lack of a statistically significant difference between these device-user groups when it comes to desire to share, collapsing all six engagement items, the higher rating for mobile users ($M = 5.0$, $SD = 1.1$) compared to the desktop/laptop Users ($M=4.6$, $SD = 1.2$) produced a statistically significant difference ($t = 3.816$, df = 548, $p = .000$, two–tailed).

Enjoyment of Mobile News

When it comes to enjoyment from getting digital news from IGM sources, mobile users reported higher enjoyment levels than desktop/laptop users across all seven items in the survey (Cronbach's alpha = .91), on a seven-point Likert scale (Table 7).

Table 7: Enjoyment measures producing statistically significant differences.

	Mobile User	Desktop/Laptop User
"I enjoyed doing this activity very much."	M=4.83, SD=1.51	M=4.39, SD=1.60
"This activity was fun to do."	M=4.28, SD=1.61	M=3.84, SD=1.65
"I thought this was a boring activity." (**Negative question)	M=2.43, SD=1.42	M=2.63, SD=1.46
"This activity did not hold my attention at all." (**Negative question)	M=2.29, SD=1.34	M=2.68, SD=1.56
"I would describe this activity as very interesting."	M=4.72, SD=1.46	M=4.33, SD=1.57
"I thought this activity was quite enjoyable."	M=4.57, SD=1.54	M=4.16, SD=1.58
"When I was doing this activity, I was thinking abut how much I enjoyed it."	M=3.35, SD=1.79	M=2.91, SD=1.60

Six of the seven measures produced statistically significant differences:

- "I ENJOYED DOING THIS ACTIVITY VERY MUCH": ($t = 3.334$, df = 548, $p = .001$, two –tailed)

- "THIS ACTIVITY WAS FUN TO DO": ($t = 3.148$, df = 548, $p = .002$, two –tailed)

- "THIS ACTIVITY DID NOT HOLD MY ATTENTION AT ALL" (**reverse coded): ($t = 3.165$, df = 548, $p = .002$, two –tailed)

- "I WOULD DESCRIBE THIS ACTIVITY AS VERY INTERESTING": ($t = 3.039$, df = 548, $p = .002$, two –tailed)

- "I THOUGHT THIS ACTIVITY WAS QUITE ENJOYABLE": ($t = 3.060$, df = 548, $p = .002$, two –tailed)

- "WHEN I WAS DOING THIS ACTIVITY, I WAS THINKING ABOUT

  HOW MUCH I ENJOYED IT": ($t = 2.988$, df = 548, $p = .003$, two –tailed)

The only enjoyment measure that did not produce statistically significant differences between mobile users and desktop/laptop users was the reverse-coded answers for the negative question "I thought this was a boring activity" ($t = 1.604$, df = 548, $p = .109$, two –tailed). On this item, mobile users still reported less boredom compared to the desktop/laptop users.

Reverse-coding the negative questions and collapsing all seven enjoyment items yielded a higher rating for mobile users ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 1.2$) compared to the desktop/laptop users ($M=4.3$, $SD = 1.3$) produced a statistically significant difference ($t = 3.650$, df = 548, $p = .000$, two–tailed).

Familiarity/Ease of Use With Technology

As mentioned earlier, previously-tested indicators of "power-usage" (Sundar and Marathe, 2010) indicate survey participants reported only moderate comfort, ease and desire to engage with new technologies. These six items, which produced a Cronbach's alpha of .89 for this study, ranged from 4.9 to 6.3 and resulted in a mean score of 5.4 on the 10-point Likert scale.

Splitting participant scores by the median of 5.5 categorized 322 of the 632 participants as "power users" (a mean user score at or greater than 5.5) and 310 participants as "nonpower users" (with a mean user score less than 5.5). Perhaps not surprisingly, power users tended to be somewhat younger members of the group of

participants (the majority of participants age 49 and under were power users, while the majority of participants age 50 and over were nonpower users.)

Power users tended to use mobile devices as their main device for checking or reading news, while nonpower users tended to use desktop or laptop computers for checking or reading news (Table 8).

Table 8: Frequencies of Power User status by device.

	Power User	Percent	Nonpower User	Percent	Total Frequencies
Mobile	177	65%	98	35%	275
Desktop or Laptop	145	41%	212	59%	357
Total	322		310		632

In addition to using different devices for checking news, power users went to different <u>main</u> sources within IGM's fleet of digital products. Correlating power/nonpower user status with main news source produced statistically significant results ($r = .172$, $p = .00$). Power users tended to prefer Apps, as well as philly.com products, while nonpower users tended to prefer the inquirer.com website or the Inquirer's digital replica website (Table 9).

Table 9: Frequencies of power user status by preferred IGM digital news source.

	Nonpower User	Power User	Total
Inquirer.com site			
Count	68	37	105
Percent	64.8%	35.2%	
Percent of Total	10.8%	5.9%	16.6%
Inquirer digital replica website			
Count	91	72	163
Percent	55.8%	44.2%	
Percent of Total	14.4%	11.4%	25.8%
Inquirer replica APP			
Count	56	78	134
Percent	41.8%	58.2%	
Percent of Total	8.9%	12.3%	21.2%
Inquirer APP			
Count	12	21	33
Percent	36.4%	63.6%	
Percent of Total	3.9%	3.3%	5.2%
Philly.com			
Count	78	78	180
Percent	43.3%	43.3%	
Percent of Total	12.3%	12.3%	28.5%
Philly.com APP			
Count	3	9	12
Percent	25%	75%	100%
Percent of Total	0.5%	1.4%	1.9%
Phillydailynews.com and Daily News App	2	3	5
Count			
Percent of Total			0.8%
TOTAL COUNT	310	322	632
	49.1%	50.9%	100%
TOTAL PERCENT			

Interestingly, power users showed no statistically significant relationship with amount of time spent reading/using news on weekdays or weekends, in comparison to nonpower users.

Nonetheless, power users reported statistically significant higher levels of both engagement and enjoyment with IGM digital offerings (Tables 9 and 10).

Table 9: Correlations between power user status and engagement.

		Power User Split	Engagement Mean
Power User Split	Pearson Correlation	1	.242[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	632	632
Engagement_Mean	Pearson Correlation	.242[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	632	632

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10: Correlations between power user status and enjoyment.

		Power User Split	Enjoyment Mean
Power User Split	Pearson Correlation	1	**.305[**]**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	632	632
Enjoyment_Mean	Pearson Correlation	**.305[**]**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	632	632

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Role of Prosumption/Interactivity

The second research question asks to what degree do digital news users exploit features of prosumption and interactivity, and to what degree do these features fulfill the expressed desires of users? Does interactivity influence engagement?

The participants in this survey placed relatively low value on the limited interactive features offered by IGM's digital products at the time the survey was administered (the ability to share content via email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1; and opportunities to leave comments regarding content). When asked, "In choosing to get news from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, which of the following is important to you? (Check all that apply)," just 104 participants (16 percent) indicated that sharing via email or social media was important. Only 34 participants (5 percent) indicated that the opportunity to leave comments was important, as illustrated in Table 11.

Subsequently, participants were asked which of those same features was <u>most</u> important, and permitted to select just one answer. Sharing was rated most important by only 12 respondents (2 percent) and the opportunity to comment was rated most important by 5 participants (1 percent), as illustrated in Table 12.

Table 11: Frequencies of what is important in choosing to get digital news.

Answer	Response	Percent
A traditional "print-like" experience	422	67%
Most recent news or news updates	487	77%
Components with audio, video or other graphical features	86	14%
Opportunities to share content vial email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1	104	16%
Opportunities to leave comments	34	5%

Table 12: Frequencies of what is <u>most</u> important in choosing to get digital news.

Answer	Response	Percent
A traditional "print-like" experience	226	36%
Most recent news or news updates	378	60%
Components with audio, video or other graphical features	11	2%
Opportunities to share content vial email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1	12	2%
Opportunities to leave comments	5	1%
Total	632	100%

As noted above in the section reviewing use engagement, on a six-item index, the only engagement measure that did not produce statistically significant differences between mobile users and desktop/laptop users was the desire to share content via email or social media ($t = 1.568$, df $= 548$, $p = .117$, two–tailed). Both groups indicated little desire to share the content, yielding the lowest mean scores within the engagement items: 3.77 for mobile users and 3.52 for desktop/laptop users on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "no desire to share."

In addition to not placing high value on the ability to share IGM news via email or social media, participants also were generally uninterested in leaving comments on the websites or apps – 69 percent of participants indicated they had never left a comment on IGM digital news sources, as illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13: Frequencies of leaving comments on IGM digital sites.

Answer	Response	Percent
Never	439	69%
Rarely	156	25%
Sometimes	32	5%
Often	4	1%
Very Often	1	0%
Total	632	100%

No statistically significant correlation was found between the age of participant, and their lack of desire to share content or comment on articles.

Finally, at the time this research was conducted, the websites and apps of IGM did

not allow users to submit their own content. This survey indicated that the majority of

participants would not be inclined to contribute photos, videos or articles if allowed, as

illustrated in Table 14. Once again, age held no statistically significant relationship to

participants' disinclination to contribute content.

Table 14: Frequencies of how likely participants would be to submit content to IGM digital sites if permitted to do so.

Very Unlikely	353	56%
Unlikely	138	22%
Somewhat Unlikely	42	7%
Undecided	50	8%
Somewhat Likely	33	5%
Likely	9	1%
Very Likely	7	1%
Total	632	100%

Former Digital Subscribers

Finally, this research attempted to reach former digital subscribers – that is, people who

once subscribed to IGM digital products, or used IGM digital products in conjunction

with a print subscription to *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* but no longer did so at the time of

the data collections. Of the 978 former subscribers solicited to participate in the online

survey, 41 responses were submitted. When asked to briefly describe why these

participants no longer subscribed, the majority of respondents did not describe specific

dissatisfaction with aspects of the digital sites themselves. Twenty-five (61 percent of this

sub-group) cited factors such as cost, lack of time to read, they moved or were seasonal

area residents, or they complained of delivery problems with the physical newspaper

(print subscribers are offered free digital subscriptions; these former subscribers who

complained of delivery problems ended both their print and digital subscriptions). Six

participants wrote that they chose to use free online news content instead of continuing to

pay – including three who specifically mentioned using philly.com (a free IGM site that

draws some of its content from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily

News*): "Good product, with excellent coverage of Philadelphia issues, but too much

similar content is available at no cost on philly.com," one respondent typed in response to

the survey's open-ended question. Another former subscriber wrote: "… much of the best

coverage available on inquirer.com appears to be available for free through philly.com."

Six respondents (14.6 percent) replied that they no longer subscribed to IGM's

digital products because of dissatisfaction with the quality of content: "There was less

and less news," one participant wrote. Another commented: "I used to be a subscriber to

the *Inquirer*, first in its conventional, newspaper firm [sic], then online. I canceled

because I felt the quality of reporting and writing had diminished, and I was sickened by

news of infighting amongst the owners."[6]

---

[6] Like many metropolitan newspapers, both *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*
have witnessed reductions in newsroom staffing in recent years. In addition, in 2013 the ownership group of

Finally, two former subscribers cited difficulties navigating the digital content.

In the subsequent, qualitative portion of this research, the researcher attempted to interview the small pool of former subscribers who indicated dissatisfaction with the content, navigation, or paying for digital access, in order to further contextualize and understand these responses.

Interstate General Media sought court action to end their partnership and sell the company after the two managing directors were at odds. On April 25, 2014, a Delaware judge ordered that Interstate General Media should be dissolved in a private auction among its owners. That auction was conducted May 27, 2014. Ultimately, Philadelphia businessman and philanthropist H.F. "Gerry" Lenfest became the sole owner of both newspapers and the philly.com website.

Chapter 5.
Qualitative Results

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted over the course of several weeks in May and June 2014. Interview participants were identified through purposeful sampling of individuals who completed the online survey in March 2014. The goal of the purposeful sampling was to gather participants from among: various age groups and genders; those who selected mobile/non-mobile devices as their primary device for news; power/nonpower users (as determined by participants' survey scores on Likert-scaled questions regarding ease of use and familiarity with technology); users of replica (a digital reproduction of the daily printed newspaper) versus web-style news formats; and varying levels of engagement and enjoyment scores. Typical cases as well as outliers were sought for interviews. Altogether, 30 interviews were conducted, and the researcher found notable consistencies across the interviews

The demographics of the interview participants roughly mirrored the demographics of online survey respondents. Of the 30 interview participants, 17 were men (57 percent) and 13 were women (43 percent) -- 344 of the survey participants were men (54 percent); 288 were women (46 percent)]. Ninety-three percent of interview participants (n=28) self-identified as "white" (95 percent of survey participants indicated they were white). As with the online survey, the group of interview participants was also well-educated and relatively affluent: 90 percent (n=27) of interview participants indicated they received a bachelor's degree or higher (84 percent in the survey), and an additional 10 percent (n=3) indicated they had some college education (13 percent in the

survey). In terms of annual income, interview participants were a more affluent group. Seventy-three percent (n=22) indicated they earned $75,000 or more annually (55 percent in the survey). The average age of interview participants was 54.2 (average age of survey participants was 55.5).

Questions for individual interview participants were based on their individual responses to the March 2014 survey, in order to contextualize their survey responses and gain a more full understanding of their survey answers and news-use habits (Appendix B).

This chapter will first review responses elicited and consistent themes among mobile news users, including aspects of convenience, enjoyment, and the value of local news offered by IGM. Next, it will discuss participants' use of email and social media for sharing news, and their disinterest in more active forms of prosumption, including commenting on news stories or creating news content for IGM. After reviewing participants' views on the traditional, normative aspects of professional journalism in mobile news, it will describe the unsuccessful attempts to interview former IGM digital subscribers.

The Mobile News User

The first research question asks how users engage with mobile news. This includes whether users' perceptions of enjoyment influence engagement, and whether familiarity and ease of use with technology influence mobile news use. All interview participants

were asked about their degree of enjoyment of mobile news – and to be as specific as they could about that level of enjoyment.

Most interview participants who reported that smartphones or tablets were their main devices for checking news cited the convenience of digital access to news via mobile devices as one of the central aspects of their enjoyment of mobile news. Many further indicated that this convenience led them to be more deeply engaged with news and consume *more* news.

One 34-year-old schizophrenia researcher, a power-user, explained that accessing the mobile digital replica allowed her the freedom to look at the daily paper – as well as prior editions – anywhere and anytime:

"[My iPad tablet] is just always with me. I take it everywhere I go, so I can -- just anywhere I'm sitting – just pull it up and read it. It's very convenient. … I subscribed to the [daily] paper a couple of times, and then I would cancel. … What ended up happening is at home with the newspaper actually physically coming, I would pile it up for a week and not even read it, and then I was sort of like 'cancel,' because I'm like, I'm not reading it anyway. But I think [I enjoy it more now via the digital app because of] the fact that I'm able to just access it wherever I am. If the paper's sitting at home, I can't read it. I definitely read it more [now]. I'm more interested in seeing what's going on."

A 26-year-old woman, who co-owns a small window-cleaning business with her husband, explained that she enjoys that her iPad allows her to read news from any location: *"It's always readily available and, you know, I'm not tied to any specific location in my house or otherwise. So, it's just simple convenience, I guess."*

Others – who travel frequently for work or for pleasure (including retirees who winter in Florida, or Philadelphia-area residents who spend time at Atlantic Coast beaches during the summer) – explained that receiving digital news on their mobile devices allowed them to continue reading *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on a daily basis, even when they are outside the region and therefore where the physical newspaper is not available for delivery or purchase.

A 26-year-old woman said: *"In the summer, I'm not even here – we go to the shore – so, we don't have the paper there and it's easy to see what the news is that I want from my region, anywhere I want to go. And I'm, I'm from Maryland, and when I go to Maryland I don't read the Baltimore Sun anymore, I read my newspaper."*

A 65-year-old retired special-education teacher, a power-user, reported that one of the things he most appreciates about getting Inquirer news on his mobile device is that he and his wife can access the news when they travel out-of-state to visit family: *"I'm in Maryland babysitting my grandson a few days a week … so we travel from outside of Philly to outside of Annapolis every week to watch him a couple days. We can't get the Inquirer down here, so I get it on my iPad. That way, I can at least keep up with the news back home."*

And a 41-year-old power user, a mobile technology entrepreneur in the arts and culture fields, reported that he switched to a digital-only Inquirer subscription via his tablet precisely because it allowed him to read the news from home while traveling*: "My wife and I like to travel, and we spend quite a bit of time – at least once every two years, sometimes once every year – down in her home country of Bolivia. And I believe it was my most recent trip down there where – and when I go I usually spend a week or two, if*

not three or four – I would like to have the Philadelphia Inquirer with me. And since I

can't get physical delivery down there … the only option was for me to get the digital

edition. I think that's what … finally caused me to make the change from physical to

digital was needing to have it when I was not at home."

This flexibility to get digital news from afar was also valued by a few readers who
turn first to desktops or laptops to access digital news, and those who are non-power
users of technology. An 82-year-old grandmother, a non-power user with a relatively
low score of 3.00, reported that while she strongly prefers her seven-day-a-week
subscription to the printed newspaper, she relies on the Inquirer's digital replica edition
via her computer when she is away from home. *"Now it's mainly again at the shore, or*
when I do go out of town – like I was in Florida for a couple of weeks this winter, and I
check the paper every day. Whenever I'm out of town I do check it," said this retired
teacher and retired FEMA disaster reservist.

And a 68-year-old woman, who lives and works primarily in Syracuse, N.Y.,
while her husband lives and works in the Philadelphia area, said she reads the *Inquirer*
replica edition on her computer daily: *"It's very well written, and I grew up not too far*
from Philadelphia, so I am familiar with the area. And because we have another home
there, I like to sort of stay on top of things."

These readers indicated that the ability to get digital news – via any device, but
mostly mobile devices – allowed them to stay in touch with news from the Philadelphia
region on a daily basis, even when they were away. In fact, they said it increased the
amount of *Inquirer* news they consumed by allowing them access to news content in
locations where finding the printed *Inquirer* newspaper would be difficult or impossible.

They also reported, despite distance, increased engagement engaged with Philadelphia-region local news, because of digital – and largely mobile – access to the *Inquirer* via its apps or news websites.

In addition to checking the *Inquirer* news while traveling, many mobile news users reported that they checked *Inquirer* news sites (and other news sites) multiple times each day for news updates – on these occasions, participants reported going to the philly.com app or website, which offers updated news throughout the day. (While the inquirer.com website also offers updated news, participants did not report turning to this source. Some acknowledged that they had never tried the inquirer.com paywall site, launched in April 2013. Philly.com, on the other hand, has been offering free news and news updates since the late 1990s.)

A 74-year-old retired lawyer, a digital-only power user who used to subscribe to daily newspaper delivery, said he now reads the replica app every morning on his tablet said: *"I would sometimes go to philly.com if I wanted to get an update on some story that I was following."*

The desire to follow digital news updates was also true for participants who primarily read the physical newspaper. A 40-year-old mortgage broker, a nonpower user who strongly prefers to read the physical newspaper which is delivered to his home daily, uses philly.com via his smartphone during the day to update and supplement his newspaper reading: *"Online, during the day, a lot of stories come out that are new, and I'll read them for updates – or a lot of times I'll read a story in the morning and I'll go online and read it and look for the comments."*

The realm of news updates is an area where some participants said they would enjoy even <u>more</u> *Inquirer* news. Some noted that other media outlets, such as *The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal,* and Philadelphia-area radio and television stations send breaking news email or text-message alerts, which these individual readers rely on for the most recent news. Philly.com infrequently and sporadically sends out text-message alerts. Most interview participants did not know this was available from philly.com (this free service is not prominently promoted by the website or app). Neither the replica edition nor inquirer.com send out breaking news emails or texts.

A 54-year-old software sales executive, a tablet-first reader noted: *"I think I really enjoy – with both Android and iPhone – you can get notifications – so a lot of times with breaking news I get notification, which I don't think the* Inquirer *offers, but I see it through my USAToday and CNBC – I get news stories sent to me immediately. To me, I love that. That would be something I would put in a suggestion box for the* Inquirer *– that they include breaking local news alerts."*

And a 75-year-old tablet reader noted: *"my tablet, it will flash up things – at least the Wall Street Journal does, I can't say that the Inquirer does. It doesn't give me any news flashes – if I want to find out what's going on in the city, I have to go physically to the inquirer.com. Whereas the Wall Street Journal will give me a half a dozen, sometimes, flashes on my tablet about what's going on in the world or the marketplace."* When asked if he would be interested in news flashes from the Inquirer, the retired school superintendent replied: *"Oh yes, absolutely."*

Finally, when one of the owners of the *Inquirer* died in a May 31, 2014 plane crash, several *Inquirer* readers noted that they first learned about it from alerts from

alternate local sources – not the *Inquirer*: *"I also have alerts from a local TV station. I think I did that by default, if you will, every so often my phone will buzz with recent deaths, recent hijackings, ... recently, in fact the other day, the owner of the Inquirer died in a plane crash, so there have been multiple notifications about that,"* explained a 55-year-old, smartphone-first man.

While both the *Inquirer* and philly.com are active on Facebook and Twitter, interview participants did not reporting using Interstate General Media (IGM) sources on these social media venues to follow breaking news.

Additional Aspects of Enjoyment

In addition to enjoying the convenience of digital news, mobile-first interview participants expressed high degrees of enjoyment and satisfaction with other aspects of *Inquirer* mobile news: the pleasure of being informed; appreciating the depth of *Inquirer* news content; and that reading IGM digital news allows them to "feel connected" to their community and to events around the globe.

A 48-year-old man, who uses his smartphone as his main device for news but also reads the Sunday printed newspaper, explained: *"I'm a news junkie. ... I like getting news, I like getting information. I like knowing about stuff. ... I like being informed first, and entertained second."*

And a 74-year-old retired lawyer who discarded his print delivery in favor of digital-only via his tablet said: *"I like to keep up to date, and I like to try and figure out what's going to happen next, so if you don't keep up to date, it's hard to follow what's*

next. And the thing I like about the newspaper is – television gives you 30 seconds at most on a story. So many times I'll hear about something on television, but if I really want to understand it or get the facts, I tend to … look for that story and read it in the newspaper."

Another digital-only subscriber, a 41-year-old man who uses his tablet as his main device, explained that for him, the convenience of mobile and the pleasure of feeling informed go hand-in-hand when it comes to mobile *Inquirer* news: *"One thing is the convenience of the technology – the fact that I can be in Bolivia and get the news exactly as I would be able to get it if I were in Philadelphia. … But I think more than anything is just the pleasure of feeling connected and informed. …I just really enjoy feeling informed and knowing what's going on around me, and being able to have conversations about that with other people. … So it's just the pleasure of being informed and reading about the stories that are happening that are interesting, as well as just the convenience of it."*

And an 81-year-old retired nurse who is digital-only via her tablet said: *"I like to know how we're living I guess, and locally and everything else. I read the newspaper every day [via a tablet]. … You know, I just like to keep up on the news – what's going on locally as well as in the world."*

And a 54-year-old senior sales executive for a business software company indicated she believes she enjoys news more with via tablet than ever before: *"Before the tablet – I didn't keep the TV on all day. In fact, I don't watch that much TV. So the tablet and the digital experience has changed my habits that way. … [I get] more, more! Because it's so easy to do, so easy to see what the latest story is. … So I feel like I'm connected by being able to have it right on the tablet."*

A 42-year-old woman, a part-time insurance representative and a smartphone-first consumer of news from multiple sources including the *Inquirer*, explained: *"I think sometimes people don't use technology to their advantage – you disconnect yourself from the world, instead of being part of it. So I think that part of it is, I think, it keeps me part of the world instead of disconnected. ... I guess I would go back to the fact that I've always loved to learn, and I'm interested in learning new things, and I'm constantly wanting to stay abreast of what's going on in the world."*

Value of Local News

 Mobile-first users also indicated that they prioritize local news from the Inquirer, partly because they may rely on other mobile sources – primarily from the national media – for national and/or international news. In addition, several cited the depth of reporting by the *Inquirer* on local news issues, particularly in contrast to Philadelphia-based television broadcasts or station websites.

A 40-year-old IT project manager who reads the *Inquirer* replica daily on her tablet said she relies on the *Inquirer's* local news coverage because it is content that can't be found on national news sites she visits: *"It's the one thing that the* Inquirer *does well that you can't get generally on the other media sites. Like for national news, there's lots of websites. And TV channels and stuff. I can't stand the local news channels, TV, because I think that they cover nonsense, and I can't stand the way they do it. The* Inquirer *does more in depth local stuff, which I think is harder to find on the Internet outside of the* Inquirer.*"*

A 54-year-old man, a digital-only tablet news user, said similarly: *"I'm looking at other websites for national news, so I look at CNN [on the web] and I watch TV, so I think that I get enough national news coverage through general stuff that I hear about during the day, and I listen to NPR. ... I don't ignore it [national and international news] when it's in the* Inquirer*, but that's the only place I feel I can go to to [sic] get local news that's fairly in depth. If you look at the local news on the TV, it's pretty superficial."*

Finally, some interview participants indicated that the depth of the *Inquirer's* local news coverage gave it staying power over the passage of time – particularly among readers of the Replica Edition available via app or web, which does not offer news updates throughout the day, but is instead a static digital reproduction of the morning newspaper.

One 54-year-old woman who lives in the Pennsylvania suburbs, whose tablet is her main source of news, explained: *"There's usually, I guess, not really breaking news locally – I live in a boring area. Whereas nationally, there is. You know, a plane crash or something like that, so that I would get from the digital [CNN] because it's so up to date."*

The Role of Prosumption/Interactivity

The second research question asks to what degree do digital news users exploit interactive features of prosumption and interactivity, and to what degree do these features satisfy the expressed desires of users? Does interactivity influence engagement?

The participants in the online survey placed relatively low value on the limited interactive features offered by IGM's digital products at the time the survey was administered (the ability to share content via email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1; and opportunities to leave comments regarding content). During the interviews, as discussed below in this order, the participants discussed their practices and interests in digitally sharing news; leaving comments; and whether they would create and share their own news articles and photographs if the *Inquirer* allowed them to do so.

Sharing News

Although just 16 percent (n=104) of survey participants indicated that opportunities to share news via email or social media was "important" in choosing to get digital news, many of those interviewed across all age groups acknowledged that they do send articles to friends and family via email. Fewer – and these interview participants tended to be younger – reported sharing news via social media.

A 75-year-old retired school superintendent, a non-power user who uses a tablet as his main news device but does not belong to any social media groups, said he frequently emails articles: *"If it's something of interest to my family or friends, I'll email the article out to them."*

Another tablet user, a 54-year-old senior sales executive of a business software company with a high power-user score, explained why she frequently shares *Inquirer* articles via email: *"Things that I think the other person would be interested in, so I -- because I know different people – so my sister would be this, my friend would be that.*

That I would come across something I think that they would want to see, then I'll email that."

One 54-year-old sales coach, who said he particularly valued being able to share *Inquirer* content via email, explained: *"I guess that there are those that are friends of mine and otherwise that like to interact with me based on my knowledge of culture and trends and other things that are going on in society, so because of that I like to be on the cutting edge of information that may be – as much as anything else – fun and current, and be able to share that information with those around me, whether it's family members or otherwise."*

And a 41-year-old man who placed high value on being able to share Inquirer news explained: *"I guess because if there are news items that I think are important, and I know that people in my circles of influence – friends, family, colleagues -- if I believe they would also find it important than I would be able to share it with them. That's the one main reason. I think another is the, you might want to call it ego or identity, for I think we all have this desire to create an image that we want people to associate with us. So if there are things that I do value, even if I don't think anyone else in my circle of influence values, if I value them I'll share them so that they know it's something that I value. That would be another reason. ... And I think that there are a lot of people in my circle of influence that don't follow it [technology] as closely as I do, so when I see something that's more extraordinary that way, and feel like they would be interested in knowing about it, [I share it] because they tend to see me as a source for that kind of thing."*

Even readers who prefer the printed newspaper reported finding some utility in the ability to email articles. One 54-year-old man, who strongly prefers to read the printed newspaper, indicated that the main reason he turns to the *Inquirer's* digital products is to share articles via email: *"The reason I go to philly.com is probably because something in the print edition has caught my eye and often then I'm forwarding something that I see on there to a family member that's distant – my dad's in California, my sister's in California ... that's the easiest way to forward the information on to them. For example, so I'll go directly to philly.com after I've seen something in the paper, and say 'Hey, here's an article you might want to look at.'"*

Another reader, an 81-year-old male who strongly prefers the printed paper, which has been part of this morning routine throughout his adult life, said he will sometimes email *Inquirer* articles, but not via the digital-sharing options: *"I have to admit that there are times when I have scanned an article to send to my friends or to my children."*

And a 56-year-old man who works in chemical industry sales and marketing said: *"I actually take a picture of it [an article] with my phone, and send it to them that way. Or I will copy the link, if I really want them to have the real article ... I'll type the link and say, hey go check this out."*

Other participants rely on social media to share *Inquirer* news. One 48-year-old man, a power-user, who uses his smartphone as his main device for reading digital news, explained that he shares *Inquirer* articles on Facebook: *"It's usually a topic – something that is of interest to me, and I think might be universal interest for my Facebook friends, as much as I can surmise of that. Sometimes it will be of something of particular interest*

to me, something close to me, that my family and my really close friends might not be aware of, so I want to send it to them."

Several users indicated they use both email and social media to share *Inquirer* news content.

One 41-year-old man, a power-user, said he shares *Inquirer* news from his tablet via both email and social media, depending on his target audience: *"For certain people who aren't on social media I'll use email, and for other people who are on social media, sometimes I'll send it to them that way. But usually it's through email."*

And a 47-year-old woman, a non-power user who works in regional public policy, also said she frequently uses both social media and email to share news she finds on philly.com: *"It tends to be on Twitter. So in decreasing order of frequency, Twitter, Facebook, email. ... I'm a ... politically active person, and ... I work in this field – so I know kind of a lot about what's going on, and I know not only why things are going on, but why things are the way they are, um, or my opinion about why there are really poor decisions made, and I have a group of friends that are kind of like-minded."*

For some, the ability to share digital news complements their desire to discuss news with others. A 41-year-old male power user explained: *"In terms of discussing the news on a regular basis with people I interact with, it doesn't happen near as much as I'd like it to, and I think that's probably another advantage of social media is you can kind of emulate that – at least sharing things that are important to you, news and otherwise, without waiting for that serendipitous physical encounter for you to be able to have that kind of connection."*

Other participants continue to primarily value discussing news they have acquired digitally. For one 26-year-old woman, a power-user who relies on her tablet, the news is *"usually more like a talking point. I don't do a lot of sharing articles through Facebook and stuff like that. I'd rather read it and then bring it into conversation when talking to people about stuff, as opposed to sending them articles."*

Commenting on the News

While interview participants expressed moderate interest in and practice of sharing *Inquirer* news via email and social media opportunities provided through IGM's digital offerings, very few of those interviewed said they had ever left comments for public view at the bottom of articles [similarly, only 34 of the 632 survey participants (5.4 percent) placed any value on this opportunity]. This was the case among both mobile-first and non-mobile participants, and across age groups and gender.

During the interviews, most participants said they rarely or never read the comments left at the bottom of stories by other users. Some participants cited lack of time or said they were turned off by the unpleasant nature of some of the user comments.

A 65-year-old man said, *"I just don't want to use bad language like in some of the stuff I read. Let me put it this way, when I read some of the comments … some of the stuff is pretty crude. I don't need to resort to that. At the same time, like, who cares what I think about it? You know? It's my opinion."*

And a 40-year-old woman said: *"I sometimes get annoyed by the people who put comments on there, because they're usually dumb comments. … When it's anonymous stuff I usually don't read them because that's when people just put crazy stuff that's*

116

offensive on there. So, most of the time, I find what people put on them is stupid, so I don't waste my time."

And a 55-year-old woman said: *"Frankly, I don't read anybody else's comments, so why bother me commenting?"*

A 40-year-old project manager in the pharmaceutical industry, when asked why he never leaves comments, said: *"I guess it's because of the time pressures in my life, and feeling that it just – there's not even enough time in the day to read articles. ... I don't feel like I would accomplish anything by leaving a comment at the foot of an article, other than potentially making myself feel good, and I don't have an overwhelming desire to hear my own voice. So, I just think that it's like spitting into the air – that's nothing going to come from leaving a comment at the bottom of an article."*

A 68-year-old woman explained why she never leaves comments: *"I think too may people have too little to say, but they say it too frequently. I do not want to contribute in that way."*

A 47-year-old man said he is unlikely to leave comments because he feels it's a forum for reader debate rather than an opportunity to interact with the journalists: *"A lot of the times when you leave comments it's more for the banter between the people who are reading the article, and not as much feedback, I feel, to the author of it or the editor of that section. ... Otherwise, it's people leaving the pros and cons, like a he-said, she-said."*

And a 74-year-old man said that while the comments section initially interested him, after reading them briefly he was disinclined to ever participate: *"When I first saw that was available, I started to read them, but I felt I wasn't getting anything out of them.*

They seemed silly. It seemed like people were arguing back and forth, and people who were very conservative would say one thing, and the people who were liberal would attack them. It just seemed to be a waste of time."

Other interview participants said they were wary of presenting their views in such a public forum.

One 26-year-old woman and small business owner explained: *"I don't feel 100 percent comfortable sharing everything with the entire world. I know that's kind of odd to say, because I'm on social media, but when I'm on social media it's private. Only shared between friends and family, so you know, I think it's a privacy thing."*

Another participant, a 54-year-old senior sales executive, explained that she was particularly reluctant to use the Internet to comment publicly on anything political: *"Once you put something online, it never goes away. It doesn't! ... Because say I put a political opinion out there, and then five years or two years down I apply for a job, and that political opinion is completely against the guy that's hiring – it's that kind of thing. ... So I guess I wouldn't want to put my opinions about something because I don't know what would ever happen to that – if it would come back and haunt me."*

Similarly, a 55-year-old man explained that leaving comments could impact him professionally: *"It's just that fear of having something there that may be taken in a different way, or may be used against me."*

Others indicated that they prefer to discuss news verbally, instead of digitally. One 34-year-old schizophrenia researcher (although a power-user greatly at ease with technology) explained that she prefers to share news via discussions: *"I think if I had a comment, I would share it with someone I could talk to and sort of bounce ideas around.*

Nothing has made me say, 'Oh, I need to let the world know this is what I feel about this particular story'."

And a 26-year-old woman said: *"I think it's more like my personality ... unless I had something very specific. I don't feel 100 percent comfortable sharing everything with the entire world. I know that's kind of odd to say, because I'm on social media, but when I'm on social media it's private. Only shared between friends and family, so you know, I think it's a privacy thing."*

Only a few interview participants – all men – indicated interest in or habit of leaving comments.

One 75-year-old man said he recently has been thinking of adding his voice in the online comments section because of some local political issues that have 'pushed his button:' *"I think I'm going to start doing that because of certain things going on in the city right now that I'm not very satisfied with – the school funding, the city council, some social things going on in the city."*

One 48-year-old man, who uses his smartphone as his main news device, explained why he sometimes leaves comments at the bottom of national and international news stories: *"Usually I try to say something funny in relation to the story. I use the comment section as my forum to try and express my humor ... for example, with the situation with Bergdahl,[7] I've come across the term 'Berghazi,' and I'll try to use that – and some people like it, and some people get offended by it. ... I try to stay away from*

---

[7] U.S. Army soldier Bowe Bergdahl, released from captivity in Afghanistan in May 2014 during the time these research interviews were conducted, was the subject of heated political debate over the terms of his release in exchange for Guantanamo Bay prisoners. The term 'Berghazi' combines the soldier's name with the Libyan city of Benghazi, site of an uprising in 2012 in which an American ambassador was killed, conflating the two events which occurred during the presidency of Barack Obama.

getting completely angry or something like that – I like something that's fun, or

highlighting something that people don't recognize."

The outlier in this group was one 40-year-old man who turned to his smartphone

for digital news. An avid reader of sports news on philly.com, he said he both reads the

comments and enters into debates by leaving his own comments under sports stories, but

not other kinds of articles that he reads, such as local and national news. When asked why

he enjoys this feature in the realm of sports news, he explained: *"Because there are a lot*

of characters out there [laughter]. Yeah – honestly some of the [professional sports]

writers are not great, so I enjoy the back and forth between the commenters who can

provide more insight than the actual writers."

Contribution of News Content

At the time this research was conducted, the websites and apps of IGM did not

allow users to submit their own news content. Survey results indicated that the majority

of participants would not be inclined to contribute photos, videos or articles if allowed –

only 5 percent of respondents (*n*=33) indicated they were "somewhat likely" to submit

content; just 2 percent (*n*=16) indicated they were "likely" or "very likely" to contribute

content.

Disinterest in producing news content was uniform across mobile and non-mobile

users, as well as power and non-power users of technology.

Interview participants were subsequently asked about their absence of desire to

help contribute/write/share news (participate in prosumptive news activity). Lack of time

and lack of interest were the most-commonly mentioned reasons.

A 55-year-old technical sales executive for an electrical equipment manufacturer, who travels frequently for work, explained, **"I have no time for that."**

A 48-year-old man, and account director for a benefits and compensation consulting firm, *"I'm more of a consumer of the news ... it could be a generational thing – but I'm not interested in doing that."*

A 42-year-old woman, a part-time insurance representative explained she has no time between work and family: *"I have six children and I'm so busy at home most of the time. ... Taking care of them, as far as grocery shopping, and planning their 20 million activities, and things like that."*

A 47-year-old woman, a nonprofit executive, also said: *"You know, I just don't really have the time. It's mostly because I don't have the time."*

Other interview participants also viewed news creation through the lens of privacy concerns. When an 81-year-old retired nurse was asked why she indicated she was unlikely to post her own news content, she said: *"Well, I don't know. It seems to me it might be too public."*

Others explained that they believe the creation of news content was the job of journalists.

A 41-year-old man said: *"I'd rather have people do that who are professionals at it, and I think there is already a lot of noise out there with everyone else thinking that they ought to be doing that kind of thing, and I just don't put myself in that camp of people who feel that need. ... It's just not a good use of my time."*

And a 40-year-old woman, an IT project manager, suggested it would be exploitative if a for-profit news organization collected free news from users: **"It's**

basically the Inquirer *getting free journalists. People who do their work for them for free, so that's my problem with it. Can't they have a journalist do the stuff, and why am I paying all of my money for the subscription, when you can have any clown put something on there. ... It's basically them getting me to do their job for free."*

A few outliers were open to the concept of contributing news stories or news photos if it was unique content that might contribute to a larger news story.

A 48-year-old man said: *"If I saw something that was happening, I would send it in if it didn't involve me. Like if I saw an accident on the highway, or something that was going on that was a major news story, I would certainly send it in. But highlighting what I do, and making that news, that would be something I would be uncomfortable with. Unless it was related to some larger news story, then I might consider it."*

But more frequently, interview participants said they were unlikely to have newsworthy to contribute to the *Inquirer* or philly.com, or they would not reflexively think to gather news if they by happenstance encountered a newsworthy event.

A 54-year-old man explained: *"There just hasn't been anything newsworthy where I live -- I live out in the suburbs, and I mean, I don't really have – there isn't like news happening around me ... anything significant other than accidents out on 202 or something like that, but usually I hear about that from some other news stories. I would probably be replicating what other people already know. So, I guess I just don't feel – because I'm out I the suburbs – I don't feel like I have, that there is anything in my neighborhood that would be newsworthy usually."*

A 40-year-old man, a pharmaceutical industry project manager, similarly said: *"I don't think I have anything interesting enough for the world to see. ... I don't consider*

myself a 'citizen journalist,' even at the most grassroots level, you know, like reporting

on local high school sports – I wouldn't do that."

Even if he witnessed a newsworthy, breaking event, a 65-year-old retired special-education teacher explained: *"I'm an observer, not a participant at that point."*

One outlier, a 56-year-old chemical industry salesman and tablet-first power user, indicated he would be "somewhat likely" to contribute content, and would also be interested in content created by others: *"It's interesting to see other's people's perspective on things. I mean, I may contribute, you know – sometimes you can come across a great photograph you took, you know, it might be interesting to have those kind of sections. ... I've submitted things to some local [shore] papers. ... It's kinda neat. It involves more of the public within the process. Maybe [it] engages people to read and become more knowledgeable."*

Traditional, Normative Aspects of Professional Journalism in Mobile News

The third research question asks how the traditional, normative aspects of professional journalism are perceived by users in the realm of mobile news.

Mobile news users of the *Inquirer* who participated in interviews indicated general satisfaction with the credibility and accuracy of the news content. In general, they reported that news was trustworthy, balanced and objective – terms generally associated with the normative notions of professional journalism. Several interview participants specifically contrasted the balance of news articles with perceived political slant within the opinion section (where columns and opinion pieces are grouped together and clearly

123

marked within the various IGM apps and websites, as they are within the physical newspaper).

A 54-year-old woman, who is mobile-first, noted by way of contrast: *"They have a couple [opinion column] writers that are staunch – I mean Tea-Party – right-wingers. I don't read those sections, I just skip over it, in the opinion section. But I think the news balanced. … The opinions aren't – but the news part is."*

However, a handful of interview participants perceived some political bias in news coverage: *"I think it has a liberal bent,"* complained a 55-year-old tablet-first female reader. And a 48-year-old tablet-first male noted: *"There might be a slight lean towards a liberal outlook, but I think they try to be relatively balanced. I would not indicate that there's a strong bias that I can ascertain generally."*

Others cast aside others' complaints that the *Inquirer's* news has political bias: *"Some people think it's a bit liberal, but I think it's fairly balanced,"* said a 75-year-old man.

Some participants indicated that while they do not place absolute faith in any journalist's accuracy, the *Inquirer* generally does a good job in this regard.

One 81-year-old man said the *Inquirer* news is: *"As accurate and trustworthy as any newspaper. … Reporters are reporters. They get paid on writing stories. Usually they get their facts pretty straight – but it some cases they don't."*

Another participant, a 55-year-old male, said he believes the *Inquirer* is trustworthy because of its investigative journalism: *"They have really done some nice exposes, if you will, on schools and funding – they had a lot of, you know, a couple Pulitzer Prizes on some of the investigations and reporting they've done."*

And a 68-year-old woman, who reads the digital replica, indicated that she believed in the Inquirer's accuracy, or strong attempts at accuracy, based on the corrections section: *"They publish corrections almost daily, and sometimes it's minor things – like, 'misidentified the third child from the left in the picture at the playground' type of thing. Or mess up a photo credit. But sometimes it's because they had misstated someone's position on something, and there, they seem to be fairly quick to acknowledge and correct errors."*

However, a few interview participants indicated that the quality and/or depth of news within the *Inquirer* has declined in recent years.

A 40-year-old woman, when asked if the *Inquirer's* news content was trustworthy and accurate, replied: *"I don't think they're as good as they used to be. I see typos and grammatical problems – I don't know how much they proofread what they write sometimes. ... But I think generally ... they're ethical."*

And a news omnivore, a 48-year-old tablet-first man who incorporates national media outlets in his news consumption, said: *"I would say they're generally trustworthy and they're generally trying to do things the right way, but I would never have the Inquirer or any other one source as my only source for news. I don't think I get the whole picture with only one voice."*

Definitions of News

All interview participants were asked: "How do you define news? When you think of news, what does news mean to you?" Most answers incorporated traditional, normative aspects of journalism such as accuracy, timeliness and objectivity.

A 65-year-old man, a retired special education teacher, defined news this way: *"Hopefully factual. Information that's current. There are certainly these news outlets have very [unintelligible] biases. ... I just want to know the facts, I don't want to know somebody's opinion mixed up too much with the facts."*

An 82-year-old woman, a retired teacher and retired FEMA disaster reservist, said: *"Something that's currently happening or topical, or something that's different from the ordinary events. ... I think you read it to stay current."*

A 54-year-old woman, a senior sales executive for a business software company, said news is: *"Stories that are real. I guess I'm trusting reporters ... so news would be facts, things that are happening around my community, around the world. Stories, but they are real stories."*

And a 55-year-old man defined news like this: *"Something that has happened that is either of interest to myself, to my family, to the country – it could be sports, it could be political, it could be a death – it could be anything that informs me of something that I wasn't previously aware of."*

Others placed an emphasis on its fluidity, like a 74-year-old man who said: *"It's unfolding. It's never static."*

Some participants defined news as having the potential for direct impact on their lives, like an 81-year-old retired nurse who said: *"It's information and it's communication, and it lets you know what's happening in other parts of the country, in other parts of the world, that on some point might have an impact on me, or on my family. The local news, I like to know what's going on in Philadelphia and surrounding counties. I really like to keep up with what's happening."*

Still others emphasized that valuable news should incorporate analysis, like this 41-year-old man, a mobile technology entrepreneur, who said: *"News to me should be as unbiased as possible, and should be – there's the thing that happened, and then there's the thinking behind what happened, and what's going to happen as a result of what happened. I think that's what's important to me – not just the headline, not just what happened, but the thoughtfulness about what that means. ... So news, of course, needs to be relatively timely. But it's the meaning of it that matters most. So you can actually understand why it's important that this thing happened, or didn't happen, and what are the effects of that news item."*

Others – often younger interview participants -- incorporated elements of entertainment into their definition of news. One 48-year-old man, an account director for a benefits and compensation consulting firm, when asked to define news, said: *"It's not just news – it's news, sports, things that are softer news – entertainment stuff, all that stuff – I'm a big reader, I read lots of stuff. Things that I'm interested in. ... A pretty wide definition I would say, not just front-page type stuff."*

A second 48-year-old man incorporated friends' personal events on social media into his definition of news: *"News to me is information that is happening right now – or in the past 24, 48, 72 hours – that affects people – that could be people I know, Facebook, it could be news that you see in the newspaper, TV, radio, blogs. So, I think it's a wide universe. It could be my friends posting that they've eaten pizza for lunch, or it could be a terrorist attack – it's all news to me."*

Journalists' Decision-Making Process, Presentation

In addition to generally finding IGM news articles credible and trustworthy, and for the most part defining news within its normative journalistic parameters, a number of interview participants indicated they value the journalistic practices that lie behind the daily prioritization of stories.

Most of the participants in both the online survey and the subsequent telephone interviews preferred the replica *Inquirer* newspaper as their source for digital news – either via the replica app or via their browsers – in comparison to the other IGM digital offerings which feature a web-style design.

And nearly all of those interviewed said they begin reading the replica by looking at the stories on the front page. This was true for both mobile-first and computer-first digital readers who rely on the digital replica.

One 40-year-old power-user, mobile-first man who works as a pharmaceutical industry project manager explained: *"By definition the front page is the most important news, and – you know – what's important isn't necessarily the most interesting, but I'll – you know – that's why I read the Inquirer, is to rely on the editors there to tell me what's most important."*

A 48-year-old mobile-first man, said he always begins with the front page of the paper and reads through to the end, said he values the decisions editors have made for the front page: *"They either chose the top stories that are going on, which lets me know that they're being consistent with other news sources, or if there's something that more specific – local – I know that they're focusing on that. ... It lets me know the most important issues locally as well as in the [national and international] news, so to speak."*

And a 26-year-old woman, a small business owner, reported: *"I know I'll find something interesting, just based on how they lay it out."*

Regarding the front page, a 56-year-old chemical industry salesman said: *"I think that's probably your biggest global and regional stories that you need to be up to speed on – international news and the big local stuff and the big U.S. stuff."*

In addition to finding value in the articles placed on the front page, many digital replica readers – both mobile and computer-first – indicated they navigate the digital newspaper in a linear style, following the prioritization decisions made by journalism editors (as well as news-reading habits often formed before the transition to digital news, participants acknowledged).

A 34-year-old woman, a schizophrenia researcher who turns to her tablet for news, explained why she prefers the replica app to other IGM formats: *"I think because it's set up like the newspaper, so you actually read the newspaper. So I just go from article to article. … I start from the front page, just as I would if I were reading the physical newspaper. I read the first article, and then if I continues on, I'll go finish the article, but then I come back to the first page again and finish it."*

A 58-year-old man, a pharmacy manager at a community hospital, explained: *"Mostly I use the replica edition, because I just love it. I love the layout. It's the actual paper, you know. I find philly.com is laid out differently, and it's not bad for information – if I'm looking for more general information, I'll go to philly.com. Perhaps I'm looking for music venues, or something along those lines. But for news, whenever possible, I prefer the replica. … I love that the replica is just that – it's no different than holding the*

paper in my hands, although there's no tactile, obviously, sensation. Because the layout's identical, I really like it. I find it comforting, in some ways."

A 26-year-old tablet-first female replica app user explained: *"I switched to doing everything digital just because of the convenience of it – I do like having the newspaper. That makes me much happier than reading something that would be on a blog or a regular website. ... I like reading the [replica] newspaper. ... I like to see the newspaper and flip through the different sections because I may go to a section where I normally go, and I know what I'm going to find in general. I know I'll find something interesting, just based on how they lay it out."*

And in a digital world where web-style presentation is dominant, one power-user – a man who primarily uses the digital replica site on his computer – found novelty in the digital recreation of the daily newspaper: *"I guess I'm a little old-school, and I like the layout. I like the fold-over, and I like that 'OK here's the whole page' and I can just click on whatever I want to read on. I still appreciate the format and the layout of the hard copy, and the articles. I'm the IT person for my company, and I do the website; I do all that, so it gets kind of boring looking at the webpage because all web pages are pretty much similar. So when you see like an ebook or a newspaper, in that type of format, I appreciate seeing it that way."*

Former Digital Subscribers

The March 2014 online survey attempted to reach former digital subscribers – that is, people who once subscribed to IGM digital products, or used IGM digital products in

conjunction with a print subscription to *The Philadelphia Inquirer,* but no longer did so at the time of the data collection. Of the 978 former subscribers solicited to participate in the online survey, 41 submitted responses. When asked to briefly describe why these participants no longer subscribed, the majority of respondents did not describe specific dissatisfaction with aspects of the digital sites themselves. Instead, they cited reasons primarily having to do with cost, available time to read news, or moving away from the area.

However, six survey participants cited a decline in quality of content, and six more said they didn't want to pay for news if it was available for free (several specifically cited IGM's philly.com, which uses news content from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*). Two others complained that they had difficulty navigating the digital content. These 14 individuals were each solicited twice for participation in a telephone interview to further understand and contextualize their responses. Unfortunately, none were willing to participate in interviews.

Chapter 6.
Mixing the Results and Discussion

The purpose of this explanatory, mixed-methods research project was to provide a better understanding of the mobile news habits and practices of digital newspaper subscribers, in this case, subscribers of Interstate General Media (IGM) – the parent company of a legacy, major metropolitan newspaper *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and its sister tabloid, the *Philadelphia Daily News*. Informed by both active audience theory and uses and gratifications theory, the research began with the premise that users actively make choices regarding news sources, news content, the form of news, and technological device (smartphone, tablet, computer or printed paper) used to access the news. The research sought to understand those choices and it evaluates mobile users' engagement with prosumptive, interactive features, including how mobile news users perceive the normative aspects of journalism. The data helps journalists and journalism scholars understand the mobile news habits and practices of the digital subscribers of a legacy newspaper's apps and websites. A prevailing theme of continuity emerged – continuity in news use, and gratifications sought and obtained, from the traditional, printed newspaper to the digital forms of news content now available on mobile devices. For the legacy news organization IGM, the data offers encouraging insight into the present levels of their digital subscribers' engagement, enjoyment, and loyalty. The mobile platform yields higher levels of engagement and enjoyment among digital subscribers, illustrating the importance of tablets and smartphones for news delivery, in comparison to desktop/laptop news users. However, the demographic data reveals that IGM's current fleet of apps, websites, and interactive features appears not to be winning over many

younger, "digital native" paying subscribers. If digital – and specifically mobile – is the future of news, this is a troubling indicator for major metropolitan newspapers which have incorporated similar digital strategies and products. This chapter will first discuss the quantitative findings from the online survey data. It will then discuss the qualitative findings obtained from the analysis of the telephone interviews with digital subscribers. Because this is a mixed-methods research project, the chapter will then consider how the interview data helps contextualize and/or explain the quantitative survey results, and vice-versa. Areas of triangulation between the quantitative and qualitative data, which provide greater confidence in the results, will be reviewed. Finally, the chapter will consider the theoretical implications of the results, as well as the limitations of this project and directions for future research; specific suggestions for IGM and general recommendations about mobile news strategy for legacy media organizations are in the final "conclusions" chapter.

Quantitative Results

The quantitative survey data indicates that the majority of the Inquirer's digital subscribers are loyal, but aging users. Overall, they are relatively heavy news users – getting their news on a variety of devices <u>and</u> via newspaper delivery. Only 15 percent (n=92) were digital-only subscribers, with no home newspaper delivery. This suggests a possible opportunity for growth, particularly among younger demographics.
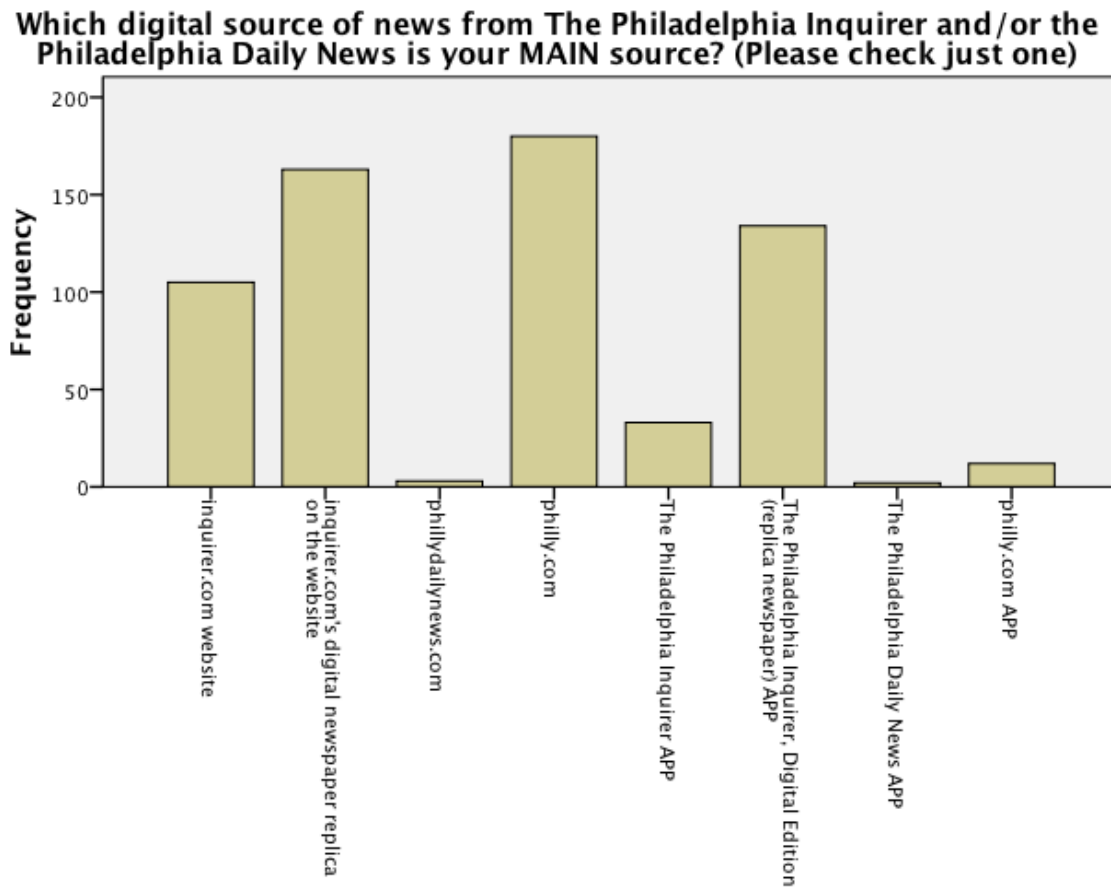
As a whole, these digital subscribers are well-educated and relatively affluent, often owning multiple digital devices. Ownership of desktops/laptops, tablets, and

smartphones is above national averages. That being said, IGM's digital subscribers do not rate themselves as highly comfortable or at ease with technology – at least compared to younger populations measured by prior research using the power-user scale, which gages familiarity and comfort with technology (Sundar and Marathe, 2010). Nonetheless, these participants reported substantial daily use of digital technology to keep up with the news, and a majority of users (60 percent) reported the most important quality of digital news was getting the most recent news and news updates.

Digital subscribers depend on IGM digital products first and foremost for local news. On weekdays, 57 percent reported spending more than 20 minutes on IGM digital news sites, and 22 percent reported spending between 46 and 60 minutes on these IGM sites. On average, IGM digital subscribers reported spending 37.7 minutes on IGM digital news sites. (By comparison, Pew reported in 2010 that the average reader spent 37 minutes with a printed newspaper, and the Internet news user spent an average 38 minutes on all sites[8].) As a whole, these digital subscribers, however, were highly fragmented among IGM's many digital products (Chart 8).

---

[8] Retrieved from http://www.people-press.org/2010/09/12/section-1-watching-reading-and-listening-to-the-news/

Chart 8:

Which digital source of news from The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News is your MAIN source? (Please check just one)

This group of digital subscribers is highly attracted to the traditional "print-like" experience" of getting digital news, as evidenced both by their answer to this direct question, as well as the large number of participants who most use the Inquirer's digital replicas – either via app or on the web (represented as separate bars on the above chart, but when added together eclipse use of the philly.com website and app). This could add value to the advertisements printed within the newspaper pages. However, it should be noted that this preference for digital replicas may well be a function of the average participant age of 55.5 years.

When it comes to getting news on mobile devices, results from this explanatory study suggest that users who identified tablets and smartphones as their main device for getting digital news report statistically significantly higher levels of both engagement with and enjoyment of Interstate General Media digital news products, compared to subscribers who primarily use desktop/laptop computers.

A majority of mobile users tended most to use the *Inquirer* replica, either via app or browser – 53.1 percent of mobile users said the replica was their main IGM source. Philly.com via app or browser, was the second-leading IGM source, with 24.7 percent of mobile users. Similarly, among mainly-desktop/laptop computer users, 42.3 percent said the replica via browser or app was their main IGM source; 38.8 said philly.com via browser or app was the second-leading IGM source.

The fact that both mobile users and computer/desktop users tended to use the same IGM digital sources suggests that aspects of getting news on mobile devices positively affect both engagement and enjoyment of digital news. The specific aspects of mobile devices, such as convenience and mobility, that positively contribute to reported levels of both engagement and enjoyment were explored further in the qualitative phase of this research, and can be found in that section below.

The online survey also explored whether familiarity and ease of use with technology influence mobile news use. Although as a group, the IGM digital subscribers did not report high levels of comfort, ease and desire to engage with new technologies in comparison to prior studies with younger populations, the survey results suggest that participants who yielded mean power-usage scores (Sundar & Marathe, 2010) at or above the median for this population have different digital news habits and practices than

136

nonpower users. (The category of "power users" was determined after dichotomizing the median score from six items asked participants to indicate their level of knowledge, comfort, and desire to engage with new technologies. This survey produced a median of 5.5 on a 10-point Likert scale.) The majority of power users tend to use mobile devices as their main device for getting news (65 percent); the majority of nonpower users, in contrast, use a desktop or laptop computer as their main device for getting news (59 percent). In addition to preferring mobile devices for getting news, power users preferred different digital products as their main IGM news source in comparison to their counterparts. Not surprisingly, power users tended to prefer IGM apps – particularly the newspaper replica app, but also philly.com products, which feature a web-style and image-heavy format, with content drawn from both IGM newspapers, as well wire-service feature stories that do not appear in the printed newspapers. Nonpower users, in contrast, reported that they prefer the *Inquirer* digital replica on the website, or inquirer.com, which features only that newspaper's content, wire service news, and news updates. Both groups, however, showed high levels of *Inquirer* replica usage – either via app or browser. Because most survey participants owned multiple digital devices, these results indicate that power-usage status may influence the device of choice for news use. In other words, although nonpower users own tablets and/or smartphones, they tend to turn to their desktop or laptop computers first. Power users – even if they own a desktop or laptop – mainly use mobile devices. And while power users on mobile devices expectedly choose apps first – likely because of their usability and availability on mobile platforms – their choice of replica editions indicate their preferences for the traditional

form and style of news presentation does not differ from their nonpower user counterparts.

Finally, in the realm of digital interactive features and opportunities for prosumption, where users both consume and produce news, survey participants reported little interest in sharing IGM news or contributing their own news content for IGM digital products. The majority (69 percent) said they had never left a comment on an IGM site. These findings raise questions about the demand for prosumed news within the digital offerings of this legacy-media company. Although IGM does not presently allow users to submit news content, 85 percent of participants reported they were somewhat unlikely, unlikely, or very unlikely to do so if given the opportunity. Users' habits and practices of sharing and commenting, and their reported disinterest in creating news content, were further explored during the qualitative telephone interviews, discussed below.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative data from telephone interviews provides context and deeper understanding of the quantitative online survey data, especially regarding the reasons users chose devices and digital news sources. Of particular interest was the statistically significant higher level of both mean engagement and mean enjoyment among mobile-first news users, compared to those who primarily used desktop/laptop computers for news. The researcher explored the reasons behind users' reported low levels of interest in prosumptive activity on IGM sites. Finally, the users' perceptions of IGM's digital news

content and presentation of news was explored, keeping in mind normative aspects of professional journalism.

Above all, the mobile news users told the interviewer that convenience was the most salient factor in their choice to get news on tablets and smartphones, instead of desktop/laptops or other traditional forms of news media, including the printed paper. Due to the constant availability of mobile news, and because many participants reported that their mobile devices are nearly always with them, they reported that these devices are their primary choices for getting news. In addition, these mobile-first participants said they believed mobility allowed them to consume *more* IGM news – both at multiple times during the day, as well as when they had physically left the circulation-region of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News.* Mobile users most emphasized the importance of local news provided by IGM, which generally provides news coverage of the city of Philadelphia, as well as the surrounding counties in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The depth of content of this local news accessed via mobile devices was also a salient factor to several participants.   Feeling "connected" was also reported as an aspect of enjoyment of getting mobile news from IGM, as was the pleasure of being informed in their enjoyment of mobile news. These results suggest that for mobile news users, some of the motivations from the uses and gratifications framework that have been traditionally tied to legacy news media – particularly surveillance (information-seeking), continue to play a significant role in mobile news use.

Turning to users' experience with the limited prosumptive offerings of IGM's digital products, most interview participants said they had emailed IGM news content to family and friends. Fewer used social media to share content, while only a handful used

139

both email and social media to share news content. Participants also reported that they shared news through verbal discussions instead of – or in addition to – digital sharing. Prosumptive activities requiring a greater degree of agency – namely, commenting on articles or creating their own news content – did not interest the vast majority of interview participants. Most, citing the demands of work and family, said they had no time for these activities. Others expressed privacy concerns about leaving publicly-available comments or original news content on digital sites (as opposed to sites such as Facebook, where access to prosumed content can be controlled by the creator). Multiple interview participants complained about the vitriolic and argumentative nature of comments left by other readers on IGM news stories, and said it was a significant reason why they no longer read comments or had any desire to contribute their own. In addition to time and privacy concerns, when asked further about their disinterest in contributing news content, several participants indicated they believed they were unlikely in their daily routines to encounter any newsworthy events worth sharing. A couple of participants explicitly said that they believe news gathering is the job of professional journalists, and three participants said it would be exploitative for a for-profit company to publish free content from users. These comments suggest that several participants subscribe to normative journalistic notions of "newsworthiness," while a few more view the work of news gathering as the labor of professionals and publishing as the realm of a capitalistic organization.

In addition to reporting general ideas about what may be newsworthy, when asked to define "news," interview participants generally incorporated normative aspects of journalism in their responses – particularly the aspects of accuracy, timeliness and

objectivity. Furthermore, when it comes to IGM, the vast majority of participants reported that the news content was trustworthy and balanced.

When the researcher attempted to determine why the majority of digital and mobile news readers were selecting the *Inquirer* replica as their main source among the fleet of IGM digital offerings, it became apparent that in addition to valuing the normative journalism aspects of IGM news <u>content</u>, these participants also valued the traditional, linear <u>form</u> of the printed newspaper. Editors' journalistic decisions regarding which stories went on the front page were valuable to these users, and participants reported that it indicated to them the most important news of the day.

Although the population of research participants included current and former *digital subscribers* of IGM products – individuals who paid for digital-only access, or used free digital access as part of their paid home-delivery subscription – many of the interview participants reported that they incorporate a physical printed newspaper in their news-consumption routines, sometimes daily during the week or via Sunday-only delivery. Several discussed a fondness for the physical newspaper – the tactile pleasure of holding and reading it – even if they have transitioned to mostly digital, or digital-only news use. In these areas, participants emphasized longstanding habits of news consumption.

Additionally, several interview participants volunteered that their news habits – or the very existence of the newspaper itself – may be relics from an age that has passed. The researcher did not pose this question. Instead, these interview participants serendipitously volunteered the topic. The terms "old-fashioned" and "old-school" were used by some interview participants to describe themselves – even by those whose

power-user scores indicate a high level of familiarity and ease of use with technology.

Two participants who expressed fondness for the printed newspaper or its format

nonetheless called it a "dinosaur." In addition, several participants who are parents or

grandparents indicated that they believe their news habits and practices were out of step

with their peers, their children and/or grandchildren

A 65-year-old power-user – a Philadelphia native and retired special-education

teacher who owns a smartphone, a tablet and a computer – said he checks headlines on

his phone and reads the digital replica app cover-to-cover on his iPad when traveling. But

above all, he said he still prefers the texture and feel of the printed newspaper he has

grown up with and subscribed to for more than 40 years: *"I like to hold it. I'm just old-*

fashioned. I like a paper. … Always have – always since I was a kid."

A 55-year-old power-user woman who is a technical sales executive for an

electrical equipment manufacturer said: *"If I had my preferences, I would actually get the*

physical paper, you know, I'm a little old-school that way. But the problem I have is that

I travel so frequently … I decided to just actually not get the newspaper any more. I just

feel that the iPad gives you the feel of reading a newspaper."

One man, a mortgage broker who reads the physical newspaper daily but relies on

his smartphone throughout the day for news updates said: *"I've just always been a guy*

who likes to sit down with the paper in the morning and have my breakfast. I'm old-

fashioned that way. I'm 40 years old, and most people my age don't subscribe any more,

but it's just a habit I haven't broken yet. … You know, it's two things – I like having the

physical paper, and I feel like in some way I'm supporting local news. Whereas if I

cancel my subscription, it's one less person out there that's able to help keep the system

afloat. ... I grew up reading the Inquirer *... and it's kind of an institution, and I'd hate to see something like that go away."*

A 34-year-old power-user, a schizophrenia researcher who made the switch from daily to Sunday-delivery only and reads the digital replica on her tablet the rest of the week, acknowledged that her love of the replica format is a contradiction with her love of technology: *"People tell me a lot, that as much as I love technology and everything, I'm sort of an old soul. It's the kind of music I listen to ... I like older stuff, I don't necessarily listen to new stuff. But I have an iPhone, I have an iPad, I have all kinds of new technology, but I still like to read a book. ...I don't know why that is."*

A 54-year old pharmaceutical drug research scientist, who owns a computer, a tablet and a smartphone but still also gets daily delivery of the Inquirer, said he is uncertain if he'll be able read the daily printed newspaper in the future: *"I don't think we will have that opportunity, personally. ... I'm afraid of what will happen is – my sense is that the overall subscriptions – the ability to deliver newspapers – is going to go by the wayside. ... I do believe the distribution of magazines and [newspaper] home subscriptions is going to disappear at some point."*

A 40-year-old man, a pharmaceutical industry project manager who uses philly.com on his smartphone, said: *"Paging through the paper* Inquirer *in a digital format is kind of novel, but it just seems so retro and the wind is not blowing in that direction. ... The print paper's probably going the way of the dinosaur in the next 10 years anyway."*

A 40-year-old woman and IT project manager, who reads the replica app daily on her tablet, explained why she switched from daily news delivery to Sunday-only: *"It was*

kind of weird to have someone print the paper and drive to our house and throw it on our lawn – in the 21ˢᵗ century, it's kind of goofy."

A 74-year-old digital-only retired lawyer, who reads the replica app daily on his tablet, explained that while he likes the replica format, it seems out-of-step with younger generations: *"I've never seen anything wrong with the traditional print way of getting the stuff. I know that my kids, for instance, my grandchildren – it doesn't appeal to them at all."*

A 47-year-old man, who works as an IT manager and reads the replica edition daily on his computer, said: *"I feel bad that it's a dinosaur. ... People aren't getting the paper anymore – I don't know anyone in my office, with the exception of one person, who gets the paper – and it's not the Inquirer. And it's sad. ... But it's the nature of the beast. People want to see it on the phone. People want to see it on the tablet. You know, I'm not going to go to a newsprint paper where I get ink on my hands nowadays."*

These comments suggest a link between digital news and modernity, much as Fisher (1992, p.243) found with adoption of the telephone at the turn of the 20ᵗʰ century. Despite the connection these participants made between digital news and a sense of modernity, ultimately, the qualitative telephone interviews revealed dominant themes of continuity among digital and mobile news users. The surveillance (information-seeking) motivation remained particularly salient in news use in new media, as it has for newspaper users before the advent of the Internet. The continued incorporation of printed newspapers into news-using routines, and the offline sharing of news through conversation, serve as reminders that longstanding habits of news consumption and traditional practices of sharing continue to exist in the online world as well as the digital

one, and are valuable when evaluating the adoption and use of digital and mobile news within existing social practices.

Mixing the Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The fourth and final research question asks, "In what ways does the qualitative user interview data help contextualize and/or explain the quantitative user survey results, and vice-versa? Are there points of triangulation in the data?"

Combining the quantitative online survey results with the qualitative telephone interview results provides a deeper, more contextualized understanding of the news habits and practices of Interstate General Media's (IGM) digital news subscribers. Areas of "triangulation" of data in this project include the connection between enjoyment and engagement among mobile news users; the role of familiarity/ease of use with technology in influencing mobile news use; and the relative lack of user interest in interactive features allowing prosumptive activity – particularly in the areas of commenting on news stories or prosuming news content for contribution to IGM. In each of these areas, the term triangulation may be used to indicate a greater confidence in the validity; using evidence from both the fields of quantitative and qualitative inquiry suggests the same conclusions. This gives the researcher greater confidence in these results.

In addition to areas of triangulation, what also becomes apparent when the data is combined is the multiplicity of devices and news sources to which users routinely turn. This provides a more nuanced understanding of mobile news use, which would not have been detected via only the initial online survey, as a single-method research project. For

these digital news users, news consumption is not a one-device, single-source endeavor.

Instead, they often use multiple digital sources and various devices in combinations

throughout the day, and supplement digital news with traditional, printed news.

Additionally, most mobile-first users reported that they concurrently use their mobile

devices to seek non-IGM news sources – particularly for national news, international

news and breaking news.

Triangulation: Connection Between Engagement and Enjoyment.

As reported in Chapter 4, survey participants who use tablets and smartphones as

their <u>main</u> devices for getting news show statistically significant higher rates of

engagement with and enjoyment of IGM digital news products, compared to those who

primarily use desktop and laptop computers.

Questions asked of interview participants sought to confirm these statistical

findings and delve into the reasons for heightened perceptions of engagement and

enjoyment of mobile users. As reported in Chapter 5, most mobile-first interview

participants cited the convenience of digital access to news via tablets or smartphones as

one of the central aspects of their enjoyment of mobile news. Many further indicated that

this convenience led them to be more deeply engaged with news and they reported that

they consumed *more* news, because instead of reading the newspaper at a set point during

the day when it was on hand, the digital products were with them whenever they had their

mobile devices with them.

A 34-year-old female schizophrenia researcher reported: *"I love electronics. And
I have my tablet with me all the time, and I just love the idea that wherever I am, I can
open it up and read the news."*

Similarly, a 74-year-old retired lawyer who looks at inquirer.com, philly.com and other national and international newspapers online every day on his tablet said: *"I love the convenience of it. I love how it's updated. ... It's convenient, I'm not sitting down at my desk. I can sit in my living room, I can sit in my garden, I can read it anywhere."*

A 55-year-old man, who uses his smartphone for news, explained: *"It's always with me. ... That's become my central source of information. Because my business emails are on there, my personal emails, all the websites that I visit are also bookmarked. ... So it's normally the first thing I go to. So I get a reminder every morning from the Philadelphia Inquirer that the digital print is available. And normally what I'll do is I'll click on that and peruse it and read it."*

And a 48-year-old man, who uses his smartphone most for news, likewise explained: *"My phone is always near me. I have it near me nearly all the time, and it's very easy to use, and I have a number of apps on it for news ... it's basically my primary technology for getting things."*

A 42-year-old who works in home healthcare risk management also reported her smartphone is always with her, available to check the news: *"If I'm trying to do a quick break or something, or if I'm in the car, or I travel once a week – I go fishing – so I will literally check the news out on the fishing pier in between catching fish. ... I'm constantly reading the news. Although I do get a newspaper on Sundays, I tend to go more towards my phone than anything else, because it's quicker and easier and not as bulky, and simpler to use."*

In contrast, interview participants who primarily used their computer or laptop for digital news, explained that they chose these devices for news – despite their

concurrent ownership of tablets or smartphones – because they used a computer at work, or because of the ease of reading on a bigger screen. These participants emphasized their fixed location, and the functionality of screen size. In contrast to mobile users, these desktop/laptop interview participants had lower mean enjoyment and mean engagement scores from the survey.

A 58-year-old man who is a manager in the health care field, reported that while he owns a computer, a tablet and a smartphone, said he reads news on his computer at work: *"Simply because I spend so much time here, to be honest."* Likewise, a 47-year-old nonprofit executive, who also owns a tablet and smartphone, turns to her computer for news because: *"I find that when I have time to sit down and actually read news, it's because I'm at home, and that's where the computer is. Or at work – there I have a desktop."*

A 54-year-old male sales-effectiveness coach said: *"From my laptop, I traverse between work, and email, to things that I might do personally – different types of digital news that I'll view – it's just easier for me to traverse – through the majority of my day – on a laptop."*

A 47-year-old man in pharmaceuticals said although he also owns a tablet and a smartphone, the computer was his choice: *"Just because of the larger format, and it's easier for me to surf through the different sections."*

In all, the mobile users interviewed expressed appreciation and even "love" for the convenience of mobile devices, and the freedom it allows them to stay connected to news. Many reported that mobile devices are with them most of the time – and this is particularly true for smartphones, which one 40-year-old male mortgage broker noted: *"I*

have it on me 24-7, pretty much." And a 42-year-old female insurance representative

reported she wakes up next to her phone: *"Usually the first thing in the morning ... I*

check my phone and I check the news. It's the first thing I do. I check the headlines and

see what's up, and I'll check my Inquirer. So the first thing in the morning is my phone,

because it's quick and it's easy."

None of the desktop/laptop users, by contrast, reported these heightened levels of

enthusiasm for their device of choice. For them – and all but one participant owned a

mobile device as well as a desktop or laptop computer – the choice came down to

functionality of screen size and fixed location – usually their work desk.

Triangulation: Ease With Technology and Mobile News Use.

The first research question about how users engage with mobile news had also

asked whether familiarity and ease of use with technology influence mobile news use. As

reported in Chapter 4, previously-tested measures of "power-usage" (Sundar and

Marathe, 2010) indicated that online survey participants as a whole reported only

moderate comfort, ease and desire to engage with new technologies. Splitting participant

scores by the median of 5.5 on a 10-point scale categorized 322 of the 632 participants as

"power users" (a mean user score at or greater than 5.5) and 310 participants as

"nonpower users" (with a mean user score less than 5.5). Perhaps not surprisingly, power

users tended to be somewhat younger members of the group of participants (the majority

of participants age 49 and under were power users, while the majority of participants age

50 and over were nonpower users.) Power users tended to use mobile devices as their

main device for checking or reading news, while nonpower users tended to use desktop

or laptop computers for checking or reading news. Power users also reported statistically significant higher levels of both engagement and enjoyment with IGM digital offerings.

Analysis of the qualitative interviews reported in Chapter 5 confirmed these quantitative results. The quotes in the section above, from tablet and smartphone users who reported "love" and appreciation of the convenience and freedom offered by their mobile devices, were all from power users. And while power users in the online survey tended to be younger participants, the researcher interviewed an outlier.

An 81-year-old retired nurse – who produced a high 8.0 power-user score – said she and her husband became digital-only two years ago, canceling newspaper delivery to the suburban continuing-care facility where they live. When asked if she missed the physical paper, which she said she and her husband subscribed to for 60 years, this grandmother said: *"I don't. And I also am happy not to have to wait for sections I want to read while my husband finishes it. He gets the* Inquirer *on his tablet, and I get it on mine. … I was used to using a tablet for doing a whole lot of things like reading books, and listening to things, and playing some games and things like that, so the transition to doing the newspaper [digitally] was very easy."* This participant had a higher-than-average mean engagement score and reported that she enjoyed getting news a lot: *"I just like to keep up on the news – what's going on locally as well as in the world."*

Triangulation: Prosumption and Interactivity.

The second research question asks "To what degree do digital news users exploit the interactive features of prosumption and interactivity, and to what degree do the features offered by IGM satisfy the expressed desires of users. Does interactivity influence engagement?"

In the quantitative survey, as reported in Chapter 4, participants indicated they placed relatively low value on the limited interactive features offered by IGM's digital products at the time the survey was administered (the ability to share content via email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1; and opportunities to leave comments regarding content). When asked what aspects of digital news were important, just 104 participants (16 percent) indicated that sharing via email or social media was important. Subsequently, participants were asked which single feature was <u>most</u> important, "sharing" was rated most important by only 12 respondents (2 percent).

The qualitative interview analyses produce a greater confidence in the accuracy of the quantitative results, and help explain the survey findings. While sharing may not be prioritized by digital subscribers, nearly all interview participants that they had at least once digitally shared an IGM article via email or social media. As indicated in Chapter 5, participants reported they were most likely to share only if the item had specific relevance or importance to them – or to the intended recipient.

In the survey, only 34 participants (5 percent) indicated that the opportunity to leave comments was important in choosing to get digital news, and was rated most important by 5 participants (1 percent). Sixty-nine percent of participants (*n*=439) indicated they had never left a comment on IGM digital news sources.

Here too, the qualitative interviews substantiate and contextualize the survey results. As reported in Chapter 5, many interview participants found little value in the comments sections, saying they did not add anything to their news reading experience. Several objected to the vitriolic nature of comments left by others. Participants also cited

privacy concerns about leaving comments in a public forum. Others said they simply did not have the time to comment because of the nature of their jobs.

Finally, at the time this research was conducted, the websites and apps of IGM did not allow users to submit their own content. The online survey results indicated that the majority of participants would not be inclined to contribute photos, videos or articles if allowed – 85 percent (n=533) said they were somewhat unlikely, unlikely or very unlikely to contribute news content. Just 7 percent (n=49) indicated they were somewhat likely, likely, or very likely to contribute content, with 8 percent (n=50) undecided.

The qualitative results affirmed the quantitative findings and contextualized them. Only three of the 30 interview participants (10 percent) indicated they were at all interested in or likely to contribute content. Once again, interview participants reported that time constraints placed on them by their jobs and privacy concerns made them uninterested in and unlikely to contribute content. Many interview participants also said they believed they were unlikely to encounter newsworthy events in their daily lives.

One 48-year-old man explained: *"If I saw an accident on the highway, or something that was going on that was a major news story, I would certainly send it in. But highlighting what I do, and making that news, that would be something I would be uncomfortable with."*

Three of the 30 participants expressed concerns that user-generated news could be exploitative for a profit-driven media company, or that user-generated news might be untrustworthy, or better left to professional journalists. A 40-year-old male mortgage broker said: *"There's just too much room for misinterpretation. And then you get to a*

point of credibility – who are the people submitting these things. I just think it's probably

not a great idea."

And a 41-year-old male technology entrepreneur in the arts and cultural field said: *"I'd rather have people do that who are professionals at it, and I think there is already a lot of noise out there with everyone else thinking that they ought to be doing that kind of thing, and I just don't put myself in that camp of people who feel that need. Again, it's just not a good use of my time."*

When it comes to prosuming news via interactive digital sharing, nearly every interview participant across all age groups indicated they had shared an IGM news story via email at least once, and a few interview participants – mostly below the mean survey age of 55.5 – also shared IGM news over social media. However, prosumptive work involving a higher degree of activity – leaving public comments at the bottom of articles – generated very little interest from both survey participants and interview participants. And prosumptive work involving the highest degree of activity – the creation and sharing of news content, which is not currently permitted on any IGM digital site – generated the least amount of interest from both survey participants and interview participants.

Theoretical Implications of the Results

This user-centered explanatory study sought to understand digital – and specifically mobile – news use via the complex layering of choices made by participants. Consistent with active audience theory that users express agency in a multitude of ways, including by these acts of choice, participants here described making various choices among

153

devices, news sources, and forms of news. The research revealed that some of the motivations for print-newspaper use identified through prior uses and gratifications research continue to be salient motivations in digital and mobile news use. Here, surveillance – which Ruggiero (2000) defines as seeking information about political affairs, community affairs and events – continues to be a significant motivator, as digital users of Interstate General Media most valued local news which they reported informed them and connected them to their communities. William R. Elliott and William L. Rosenberg's (1987) study of the 1985 strike involving *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* found a strong correlation between the surveillance gratification and newspaper use. This motivation remains true for the digital users of these two newspapers.

Furthermore, IGM digital and mobile news gratified users via the pleasure of reading, just as Berelson (1948) reported of print newspapers. As one user reported, he reads mobile *Inquirer* news for: *"Just the pleasure of feeling connected and informed. ...I just really enjoy feeling informed and knowing what's going on around me, and being able to have conversations about that with other people. ... So it's just the pleasure of being informed and reading about the stories that are happening that are interesting, as well as just the convenience of it."*

Similarly, IGM's digital news users reported powerful daily routines and habits surrounding their news use (Berelson, 1948) – some immediately checking digital news when they first wake up, or over breakfast, and checking for updates throughout the day. *"I'm a news junkie,"* one IGM mobile news user explained.

Although Berelson, and Elliot and Rosenberg, studied users during newspaper strikes, when the paper was largely unavailable, one participant in this research, a 54-year-old pharmaceutical drug researcher, explained that he is distressed any time he cannot get the *Inquirer: "It's just the way I start my day and I'm somewhat discombobulated actually if my morning paper's not here. Actually, that's really why now I have the digital version and that over the last few years my newspaper delivery service has been spotty at best, but, if I don't start my day with coffee and the newspaper I'm all messed up."* In his case, he said a digital subscription on his tablet ensures he has the daily paper at hand. Elliot and Rosenberg suggested habit plays an important role in newspaper use, and this appears to hold true with digital and mobile news.

Sundar and Limperos (2013) suggested that new technological features influence specific "process gratifications" (that is, gratifications gained from using the media, as opposed to gratifications derived from media content). These authors suggest that Internet features – such as agency, interactivity, and navigability – stimulate unique gratifications when compared to other media forms. Along the same vein of process gratifications, Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) found that while information-seeking (surveillance) yielded the highest mean score as a predictor of Internet use, convenience was also salient.

This research suggests that mobility increases convenience, and may viewed as an additional gratification unique to smartphone and tablet news use. In this research, most mobile news users interviewed expressed appreciation and even "love" for the convenience of mobile devices, and the freedom it allows them to stay connected to news. Mobility resulted in statistically significant greater rates of both enjoyment and

155

engagement with news content, even though the majority of participants were turning to identical content and form of presentation. This suggests that in addition to enjoyment as a gratification (Yoo, 2011), situational engagement (Yaros, 2006) – the connection between a users' interest and the mobile environment – may be a gratification particular to mobile news.

Just as the surveillance motivation that dominated printed newspaper readers appears to continue to dominate digital and mobile news users, the traditional form of news continues to be salient for IGM's digital subscribers. The printed front page and linear format of the newspaper -- traditionally governed by professional journalistic news values, the assertion of professional journalistic expertise, and the inherent limitations of space on a printed page (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001) – remains the preferred from of news for the majority of IGM's digital subscribers, both mobile-first as well as desktop or laptop users.

Notions of "gatekeeping" have been significant in conceptualizing and theorizing how journalists select news for consumers (White, 1950; Gieber, 1964; Reese and Ballinger, 2001; Shoemaker et al., 2008). However, technological change with the Internet led some scholars to suggest that media "gates" – as well as notions of media "gatekeeping"--are obsolete (Williams and Carpini, 2004; Quandt and Singer, 2009; Singer, 2001; Singer, 2006). Axel Bruns (2003; 2005; 2008) argued that the term "gatewatching" was more relevant in the world of the Internet and user-generated content, eschewing the authority of brand and its control over the flow of news. However, in this research, user choice of digital replica newspapers suggest that traditional notions of news gatekeeping have not been undermined by new technology. Additionally, replica

156

users reported that they find value in editors' choices and prioritization of news content on the digital front page and throughout the rest of the replica newspaper.

Sundar and Limperos (2013) suggest that in the realm of e-commerce, "scaffolding" is a navigability-based gratification that users have come to expect (p. 516). Scaffolding methodically moves customers through a structured, step-by-step purchase process to avoid order mistakes and errant charges. IGM users' choice of digital replica newspapers suggest that these users may appreciate some degree of scaffolding – they are led step-by-step through the day's most important news content by the "gatekeepers" of a legacy news organization. On digital and mobile media, this may be particularly salient given concerns of news overload (York, 2013).

This research further suggests that users of legacy-branded news content presently have little interest in prosumptive activity. Futurist Alvin Toffler (1980) predicted that in a post-industrial age, individual prosumers would construct their own "configurative me." Similarly, in the realm of media studies, Nicholas Negroponte (1995) and others adopted the term "the daily me," predicting that audience members would use digital customization technologies to limit their consumption only to topics of personal interest. However, participants here reported little interest in publicly commenting on news, or producing their own news content on a legacy media digital platform. This is particularly notable because these users reported that they turn to the IGM digital products first and foremost in the category of "local news" – presumably an area where they would have the ability to contribute photos, video or articles. Mobile users, in particular, are accessing IGM digital products on devices that are technically capable of shooting photos

or video – content they could easily share with IGM. Nonetheless, this activity had virtually no appeal to the vast majority of survey and interview participants.

Toffler suggested that the technological features that would foster prosumptive work would be a threat to professionals. However, among IGM digital subscribers, there seems to be no threat to journalists: The content creation and editorial decisions of professional journalists are valued. Instead of actively creating and sharing their own news content, IGM digital subscribers are prosuming news via traditional means – selecting news topics that interest them, sharing them both online and offline, and discussing them with others in their social network. This is prosumption in a more classic (that is, more limited) sense, incorporating theories of the active audience.

Ultimately, digital and mobile news users of Interstate General Media are making use of new technology using old habits, practices, and patterns. Diffusion of innovations theory (Rogers, 2003) addresses how new technologies and practices are adopted by actors and by social systems, and ultimately may provide the strongest theoretical basis for the results of this research. Rogers suggested that two key factors in the adoption of new technology are the "relative advantage" over older technology, and also "compatibility" (p. 174) – that something is not altogether new, but demonstrates some aspects of continuity with past technologies or practices. In the case of IGM's digital subscribers, these users have become convinced of the advantages of digital news over printed news – convenience, availability of news updates, and (for mobile users) mobility. But users' selection of a traditional, branded legacy news source – and particularly their preferences for digital replica editions, emphasize the high degree of compatibility with the longstanding news habits and practices they formed with printed

158

newspapers. Mobile IGM news users, in particular, are early adopters of mobile news apps and mobile-optimized news websites. As such, they are likely to influence the mobile news use of others within their social systems, and thus more widespread future mobile news use. Given IGM's interest in mobile news use – and the interest of other legacy media organizations (*The New York Times,* "Innovation" report, 2014) -- these habits and practices of these early adopters are likely to shape future iterations of IGM digital news offerings. And following Boczkowski's (1999; 2004) theories on the "mutual shaping" of technology, those future iterations will likely influence the continued diffusion of mobile news.

Limitations

This research involved just one legacy media organization. While in some ways the organization at the focus of this research – Interstate General Media – is representative of metropolitan newspapers in terms of circulation decline and newsroom staff reduction, in other ways it is unique. The company is in the unique position of owning two legacy printed newspapers in the same media market. In addition, although both newspapers contribute content to the philly.com website and app, each paper also has its own independent digital presence. As a result, IGM has more news apps and websites than typical organizations that own a single legacy newspaper. IGM's digital audience is thus more fragmented. Nonetheless, I believe the findings about IGM's digital subscribers, mobile users and engagement, and digital subscribers' relative disinterest in the prosumption of news all apply to other legacy newspapers' digital and mobile content.

159

By using a user population of digital subscribers only, research participants may be viewed as a narrow group of loyalists who are paying customers. Although the survey phase of this research also included *former* digital subscribers, this research project does not reach the realm of individuals who do not or have not paid for access to IGM digital products. Nonetheless, survey and interview participants may be viewed as early adopters, since subscription digital access to these products initially began in September 2011, with new paywalled websites and apps added in April 2013.

In addition, a methodological limitation to this research is that it depended on self-selected participants. During the online-survey portion of the phase, all present and former IGM digital subscribers were solicited via email to participate, but only the first 600 participants were eligible for the gift-card incentive. Therefore, the online survey closed when that threshold was reached (632 fully-completed responses were reported in these results; the 32 extra either declined the gift cards or failed to report their names and/or addresses for fulfillment purposes). In addition, although the researcher attempted to do telephone interviews with representative individuals and outliers, those willing to participate after solicitation were once again self-selected. Furthermore, any independent, proprietary research date gathered by IGM was not available to this researcher.

Finally, the mean age of participants (55.5 years) in this research may have distinct influences on these results, and limit the applicability of the findings to older mobile news users. While this group is representative of IGM's current digital subscribers, the habits and practices of these users may not adequately represent the habits and practices of younger mobile news users turning to free digital news sources.

Directions for Future Research

A logical follow-up study to this research is to examine the news habits and practices of all philly.com users exclusively. By using a population of IGM digital subscribers – individuals who either paid for digital-only access or used free digital access because they were paid subscribers to the printed newspapers – this research did not encompass IGM news users who only access free content on the philly.com website and app. These users might represent different demographics, have different news habits and practices, and may exhibit different uses and gratifications than their paying counterparts. In addition, because the philly.com website and app do not incorporate a replica format, these users may less-value traditional forms of news, and the news judgments and prioritization decisions of professional journalists.

Given the popularity among participants of the *Inquirer's* digital replica, another line of investigation is use of replica editions from other newspapers. This research could be replicated at other newspapers with digital replicas, or among the varied customers of PressReader, which in July 2014 offered digital replicas of nearly 2,900 newspapers across the globe, including 371 in the United States.[9]

Finally, some of the specific recommendations listed in the final chapter of this research offer opportunities for empirical testing, including experimentally.

---

[9] Statistics for July 2014, retrieved from pressreader.com

Chapter 7.
Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed strong themes of continuity in the habits and practices of the digital subscribers and mobile users of the news content of two legacy metropolitan newspapers, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*, both owned by Interstate General Media (IGM). As with newspaper readers before the advent of digital news (Ruggiero, 2000; Elliott & Rosenberg, 1987, Vincent & Basil, 1997), the "surveillance" (information-seeking) motivation for news use remains dominant for both digital subscribers and the subset of mobile-first news users. These users continue to value the traditional form of the printed newspaper, when reproduced in digital replica editions, and report that they move through it in a linear fashion, as they previously did with printed newspapers. These users engage with digital news by sharing news – most commonly online via email, or offline in verbal discussions – with friends and family. They show little interest, however, in publicly commenting on digital news articles or creating their own news content for these platforms, and aside from traditional "letters to the editor," these activities were not part of traditional use of the printed newspaper.

Continuities in habits and practices are not unexpected given the average age of research participants, and their reported longstanding prior habits of reading printed newspapers – nearly every participant interviewed reported that they grew up in homes receiving newspaper delivery, and said they became print newspaper subscribers themselves as adults. While a small percentage have become digital-only news users, most still get delivery of the printed newspaper – either seven days a week, or Sunday only, and combine online and offline news use throughout their day.

162

Combining quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for enriched data: Initial survey findings could be more-closely examined; the statistics generated were contextualized; and the voice of participants could be heard independently but also generalized to generate a deeper understanding of the self-reported news habits and practices of IGM digital subscribers. Triangulating the results yielded validation in several key areas, providing a more detailed – and more nuanced – understanding of the digital (and non-digital) habits and practices of using and sharing news by IGM digital subscribers.

Researchers presumably hope for greater diversity in race, age groups, affluence and education levels among survey and interview participants than found here. Nonetheless, the relative lack of such diversity in this research has important implications for the IGM as a business, as well as its newspapers and the educational and informational role they play in the public sphere.

For the IGM as a business, a loyal readership of relatively affluent and educated individuals is a desirable audience for advertisers. However, the aging nature of this population has troubling implications for the short- and especially long-term future. If the company cannot attract younger users – even to its most technologically-advanced digital platforms – its long-term viability as a for-profit journalism institution is questionable. Another funding model – perhaps non-profit – may be necessary. In addition to the business implications of a relatively homogeneous group of aging users, this lack of diversity has implications for the Inquirer's role in informing and educating individuals in a democracy, and the Inquirer's influence in the public sphere. If the newspaper was once a dominant voice in the region, its influence may be eroding. Younger people, non-white

people, and less-affluent individuals may simply be turning to other, more dispersed media – both traditional, as well as online.

IGM and other legacy news organizations have made considerable efforts to optimize their news content for mobile platforms, and continue to strategize how to capture this growing set of users (*New York Times,* "Innovation" report, 2014). This research demonstrates a critical nexus between mobility and enhanced user engagement and enjoyment. Ultimately, this research provides insight into how loyal newspaper readers have adopted technologies to conform to their existing practices of news use and news sharing. It is not an account of how a legacy media organization adapted to technology in order to expand its audience. To that end, I offer some recommendations for IGM and other legacy newspaper companies.

A Pragmatic Approach and Recommendations

One of the reasons I selected a mixed methods approach is because of this method's roots in pragmatism. Johnson et. al., (2007) wrote: "Pragmatism offers an epistemological justification (i.e., via pragmatic epistemic values or standards) and logic (i.e., use the combination of methods and ideas that helps one best frame, address, and provide tentative answers to one's research question[s]) for mixing approaches and methods" (p. 125). Pragmatism connects outlooks and issues with methods of inquiry. Furthermore, this sort of research approach centers on the problem, and is oriented toward real-world issues.

Because legacy printed newspapers, like *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the

Philadelphia Daily News are facing substantial circulation, revenue, and digital strategy

issues, I offer several recommendations to these newspapers' parent-company, Interstate

General Media, as well as to owners of other metropolitan newspapers. IGM was

acquired by a new owner in June 2014, and that new owner is searching for a publisher

and appointing new leadership for digital strategy. Therefore, this is a particularly good

time for digital experimentation. Based on the survey data and interviews with individual

IGM subscribers, I recommend the following:

1. Push Notices. IGM digital subscribers indicated that they <u>most</u> value recent

digital news and news updates. These subscribers already receive and reported that they

enjoy push notices or news alerts sent via mobile text message or email from other news

outlets, and indicated they wish the *Inquirer* offered them. Philly.com infrequently sends

out mobile push notices. Moreover, there are no topical themes or regularity to these

notices, and its availability is not prominently advertised. Inquirer.com does not offer this

feature. Because IGM digital subscribers reported they most use IGM sources for local

news, and depend on other national media organizations for national and international

news, I advise IGM to focus its push notices exclusively on breaking news and news

updates from the Philadelphia region. IGM should also aggressively promote the

availability of push notices to all digital subscribers. The *New York Times'* "Innovation"

report (2014) indicated that younger people are moving away from browsing and

"increasingly expect the news to come to them" (p. 39). Push notices may be effective in

reaching new and younger users, as well as satisfying IGM's loyal group of digital

subscribers. Incorporating a strategy of locally-focused push notices would also likely

serve other metropolitan or regional news organizations, by channeling journalism professionals' efforts towards users' local interests, while not overburdening users with national and international news available from other media sources.

2. Follow Topics and Writers. If digital and mobile news users appreciate push notices and breaking news updates, and if younger readers expect news to be delivered directly to them, IGM should embrace opportunities for users to personalize this experience. I recommend IGM allow digital users to subscribe to news updates on major local topics of their choice, as well as to IGM's premier writers. These local topics should include news events and topics where updates and developments are likely over an extended period of time, and could include issues surrounding the Philadelphia public schools; local politics and elections; Pennsylvania and Atlantic City, N.J. casinos; and organized crime. Featured writers could include *Inquirer* restaurant reviewer Craig LaBan, who has more than 11,500 Twitter followers and more than 2,200 Instagram followers; *Inquirer* architecture critic Inga Saffron, who won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for criticism and has more than 5,700 Twittter followers; *Philadelphia Daily News* crime reporters Barbara Laker and Wendy Ruderman, who won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting for a series of articles on Philadelphia Police misconduct; and sports writers who cover Philadelphia's major-league teams.

3. Latest News and Late Sports Scores Tabs on Replica Editions. IGM digital subscribers most value recent news and news updates, however, they also prefer the form and format of the replica edition, which remains static and offers no breaking news updates throughout the day. I recommend a prominent "Breaking News" tab with time-stamped news stories, and also a "Late Sports Scores" tab at the top of the replica edition

for major scores that are too late to make the final print edition. The inquirer.com website already offers a "Latest News" section, and philly.com offers a "Breaking News" section. These features should be incorporated into the replica editions. IGM's present digital subscribers indicated they appreciate both this traditional news format <u>and</u> the latest news. The replica should offer both.

      4. Greater Sharing Opportunities on Replica Editions. The latest iterations of the replica editions via both mobile apps and browsers presently have no capacity for users to share individual stories via email or social media (in contrast, the prior replica version available did allow digital sharing; additionally, the websites philly.com, inquirer.com, phillydailynews.com and the philly.com app allow sharing via email and social media). Given the popularity of the replica form of news among IGM digital subscribers, and because these users have indicated that they do digitally share news, sharing features should again be incorporated into the replica editions.

      5. Replica App for Smartphones. Because users reported that the Android replica app is difficult to navigate on most standard-size smartphone screens (and is unavailable on iPhones), I recommend a pared-down replica app that is smartphone-specific. This home page of this app should be called "The Front Page" and feature only the articles on the front page of the printed newspaper, displayed in the same order of importance/prominence. It should also incorporate tabs leading to the "front" of each section, featuring those stories, in addition to a breaking news section. Users indicated they value editors' journalistic selections of the most important stories, as well as the latest news or news updates. This design would marry those interests with the limitations

of smartphones' screen size. Because most digital news users own multiple devices, the availability of device-specific apps should be promoted across all platforms.

6. Seek Presumed News Content from Users During Local Breaking News Events. Actively seek users' photos of breaking news events via a prominent display in IGM websites and apps, or via email to subscribers. In addition, strongly encourage on-location reporters to solicit them from users. Editors could also consider soliciting selected first-person accounts from verified users to enhance local news coverage. Although very few research participants expressed an interest in this activity, some of those interviewed indicated they would consider it in the unlikely event they encountered a newsworthy event. By opening up opportunities for users to submit photographs of breaking news events, this could be a way to experiment with presumed news content of legitimate news events. For example, in 2012, Superstorm Sandy caused devastating impact on New Jersey's beaches and extensive wind damage in the greater Philadelphia region. This widespread event would be an example of news witnessed, and likely photographed, by many in the region. Public news events like Superstorm Sandy, experienced or witnessed by a large amount of people, are events most likely to generate content that is both presumed and has legitimate news value. Other local news examples are the 2013 midday collapse of a Philadelphia Center City building onto a thrift store operated by the Salvation Army, killing six people, and a June 2014 fast-moving fire in Southwest Philadelphia that killed four Liberian-American children and destroyed eight row homes. Like the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami or the 2013 meteor that struck Siberia – both of which generated many presumed videos and photographs from

eyewitnesses, major breaking news events in the Philadelphia region could provide IGM with opportunities to experiment with newsworthy prosumed content from users.

7. Greater Outreach to Younger Users. The average age of digital subscribers in this research indicates that younger users are presently unwilling to pay for access to IGM's digital offerings. I strongly encourage IGM to consider offering digital access for free to users with an .edu email address. The Philadelphia region is home to about 90 colleges and universities, and approximately 368,000 full- and part-time students, according to the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.[10] This offers an opportunity to bring younger users to IGM's fleet of digital properties. In addition to offering free digital access to students and others with an .edu address, the availability of free push notices should be prominently advertised to these individuals.

8. Weigh Personalization Instead of Fragmentation. Presently, IGM's digital offerings are highly fragmented among a slew of websites, replicas and apps. While this may reflect a desire to respond to users' tastes and preferences, it yields a splintered group of users. From a business perspective, this likely makes it difficult to optimize advertising revenue in order to help fund the newsroom. While it creates the appearance of giving users agency via choice, IGM executives might consider whether these resources could be better allocated by developing user-chosen personalization features and/or algorithms giving users more of the kind of content they prefer. This is not a suggestion that IGM abandon its mission of providing news and information vital to a democracy and an informed public sphere, but rather supplement that by matching "softer" news content to a users' interests in sports, features, health news, arts and culture content, etc. *The New York Times'* "Innovation" report put it this way: "serve everyone

---

[10] Retrieved from http://welcometophila.com/education/colleges-universities

the same dinner but at least give them their favorite desserts" (2014, p. 37). I recommend a similar approach and outlook for IGM digital offerings. While journalists' news judgments and prioritization of the 'most important' articles could govern online and mobile presentation of front-page content, the digital display of features and sports content could be constructed via user-chosen personalization features and/or algorithms that evaluate individual user's past content preferences.

Conclusion

Although these recommendations are specific to Interstate General Media's digital offerings, I believe they may have utility for other metropolitan newspapers which have similarly struggled in recent years with declines in both circulation and advertising, while attempting to expand their digital and mobile reach. This research is specific to one journalism organization and its users, but I believe it has broader applicability in the realms of journalism practice, and that aspects of user engagement and enjoyment of mobile news content have applicability beyond the nature of this particular market. I hope it will shed light both on the mobile news habits and practices of metropolitan media users, but also provide meaningful guidance to other journalism organizations as they struggle to remain engaging, relevant, and financially viable in the mobile mediascape. Ultimately, I also hope this user-centered approach examination of the habits, practices, perceptions of credibility, and level of content-engagement of the mobile news users of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News* will inform scholarship on mobile news and contribute the understanding of uses and gratifications sought by digital

and mobile news users, within the digital interactive limitations offered by the parent

company of these two legacy newspapers.

Appendix A.

Online Survey Instrument

Default Question Block

Are you currently a subscriber or user of digital products from The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News, including:

inquirer.com
The Philadelphia Inquirer APP
The Philadelphia Inquirer Digital Edition (replica newspaper) APP

phillydailynews.com
The Daily News APP

philly.com
philly.com APP

○ Yes, I am a current subscriber or user

○ No, I am a former subscriber or user

○ No, I have never subscribed to or used The Philadelphia Inquirer's or the Philadelphia Daily News' digital products

QUESTION FOR FORMER DIGITAL SUBSCRIBERS ONLY:

Briefly tell us why you no longer use or subscribe to The Philadelphia Inquirer's or the Philadelphia Daily News' digital products. Please be specific, and state which product you stopped using and why.

Which digital devices do you own? (Check all that apply)

☐ Desktop or laptop computer

☐ Tablet, such as an iPad, Samsung Galaxy, Motorola Xoom or Kindle Fire

☐ A cell phone that is also a smartphone, such as an iPhone, Android, Blackberry or Windows phone

Which digital device is your MAIN device for checking or reading news?

○ Desktop or laptop computer

○ Tablet

○ Smartphone

Apps or applications are software you may download or come already loaded on your computer, tablet or smartphone. They appear as icons on your screen, separate from your internet browser.
Do you have any NEWS apps on your digital devices?

○ Yes

○ No

172

Please name the sources or apps you use most often to get news on your computer, tablet or smartphone. Type in the names of the sources you use most often.

Which digital sources of news do you use from The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News? (Please check all that apply)

☐ inquirer.com website

☐ inquirer.com's digital newspaper replica on the website

☐ phillydailynews.com

☐ philly.com

☐ The Philadelphia Inquirer APP

☐ The Philadelphia Inquirer, Digital Edition (replica newspaper) APP

☐ The Philadelphia Daily News APP

☐ philly.com APP

Which digital source of news from The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News is your MAIN source? (Please check just one)

○ inquirer.com website

○ inquirer.com's digital newspaper replica on the website

○ phillydailynews.com

○ philly.com

○ The Philadelphia Inquirer APP

○ The Philadelphia Inquirer, Digital Edition (replica newspaper) APP

○ The Philadelphia Daily News APP

○ philly.com APP

Do you presently receive "push notices" -- short messages sent to your smartphone or tablet -- from The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News, or philly.com?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Not sure

How often do you get digital news on a TABLET or SMARTPHONE from The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News, or philly.com?

○ More than once every day

○ Once every day

○ 3-5 days per week

○ 1-2 days per week

○ Once every few weeks

○ Less often

○ Never

When thinking about The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News and philly.com:

About how much time do you spend getting digital news on a typical <u>weekday</u>?

[   ]

When thinking about The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News and philly.com:

About how much time do you spend getting digital news on a typical <u>weekend</u> day?

[   ]

When thinking about The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News and philly.com <u>during the past week</u>:
Which topics do you read about via digital news? (Please check all that apply.)

☐ Local news

☐ U.S. and World news

☐ Sports

☐ Business news

☐ Lifestyle, Health, Arts and Entertainment, Features

☐ Opinion

☐ None of the above

When thinking about The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News and philly.com <u>during the past week</u>:

Which topic do you read about MOST via digital news? (Please check only one.)

○ Local news

○ U.S. and World news

○ Sports

○ Business news

○ Lifestyle, Health, Arts and Entertainment, Features

○ Opinion

○ None of the above

In choosing to get news from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, which of the following is important to you? (Check all that apply)

☐ A traditional "print-like" experience

☐ Most recent news or news updates

☐ Components with audio, video or other graphical features

☐ Opportunities to share content via email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

☐ Opportunities to leave comments

174

In choosing to get news from a computer, tablet, or smartphone, which of the following is MOST important to you? (Please check just one)

○ A traditional "print-like" experience

○ Most recent news or news updates

○ Components with audio, video or other graphical features

○ Opportunities to share content via email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

○ Opportunities to leave comments

Whenever checking headlines, how often do you go to and read one or more articles?

○ Almost all of the time

○ A fair amount of the time

○ Just a little of the time

○ None of the time

Which of these activities do you do DAILY on a computer? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Check headlines.

☐ Read in-depth articles

☐ Watch news videos

☐ Share news through email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

☐ Receive news through email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

☐ Post comments

☐ None of the above

Which of these activities do you do DAILY on a tablet? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Check headlines

☐ Read in-depth articles

☐ Watch news videos

☐ Share news through email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

☐ Receive news though email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

☐ Post comments

☐ None of the above

Which of these activities do you do DAILY on a smartphone? (Check all that apply.)

☐ Check headlines

☐ Read in-depth articles

☐ Watch news videos

☐ Share news through email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

☐ Receive news through email, Facebook, Twitter or Google+1

☐ Post comments

175

☐ None of the above

When thinking about whether the news reading experience is useful...

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the the information provided by The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News via its websites and/or apps?

	1) No useful information	2	3	4	5	6	7) Useful information
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When thinking about whether the news reading experience is entertaining...

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the information provided by The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News via its websites and/or apps?

	1) Not at all entertaining	2	3	4	5	6	7) Completely entertaining
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When thinking about your desire to share some news content via email or social media...

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the information provided by The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News via its websites and/or apps?

	1) No desire to share	2	3	4	5	6	7) Strong desire to share
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When thinking about your desire to discuss some of this news content with friends and/or family ...

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the information provided by The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News via its websites and/or apps?

	1) No desire to discuss	2	3	4	5	6	7) Strong desire to discuss
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When thinking about whether or not the news reading experience is enjoyable ...

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the information provided by The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News via its websites and/or apps?

	1) Not at all enjoyable reading experience	2	3	4	5	6	7) Completely enjoyable reading experience
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

When thinking about whether or not the news reading experience is convenient ...

On a scale of 1 to 7, how would you rate the information provided by The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News via its websites and/or apps?

	1) Not at all convenient	2	3	4	5	6	7) Completely convenient
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

176

○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○   ○

When thinking about your past experience getting digital news from The Philadelphia Inquirer and/or the Philadelphia Daily News, please indicate how true these statements are for you, on a scale of 1 to 7 (with 1 representing not at all true; 4 representing somewhat true; and 7 representing very true):

	1) Not at all true	2	3	4) Somewhat true	5	6	7) Very true
1 "I enjoyed doing this activity very much."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2 "This activity was fun to do."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3 "I thought this was a boring activity."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4 "This activity did not hold my attention at all."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5 "I would describe this activity as very interesting."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6 "I thought this activity was quite enjoyable."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7 "When I was doing this activity, I was thinking about how much I enjoyed it."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 representing strongly disagree and 10 representing strongly agree), how would you rate the following statements:

	1) Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10) Strongly Agree
"I make good use of most of the features available in any technological device."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"I have to have the latest available technology, or the latest available upgrades."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"I like to challenge myself in figuring out how to use any new technology."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"A little bit of intuition is all that is needed to figure out how to use any new technology."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
"Many of my friends come to me to get help related to technological gadgets."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
'I find myself using macros and keyboard shortcuts on the computer."	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

How much do you enjoy keeping up with the news?'

○ Not at all

○ Not much

○ Some

○ A lot

All in all, what do you most enjoy about getting news from a smartphone or tablet?

[text box]

Do you ever leave comments under articles on the websites and apps of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News and/or philly.com?

◯ Never

◯ Rarely

◯ Sometimes

◯ Often

◯ Very Often

If the websites and apps of The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News and/or philly.com allowed you to submit your own photos, videos, or articles, how likely are you to do so?

◯ Very Unlikely

◯ Unlikely

◯ Somewhat Unlikely

◯ Undecided

◯ Somewhat Likely

◯ Likely

◯ Very Likely

What would you say is your MAIN source of WRITTEN news?

◯ Newspapers

◯ Magazines

◯ Online/web reports

◯ Mobile news apps

◯ Other (please indicate your main source of written news)

[text box]

Do you subscribe to receive home delivery of The Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper?

◯ Yes, daily and Sundays

◯ Yes, Sundays only

◯ No

Do you subscribe to receive home delivery of the Philadelphia Daily News newspaper?

◯ Yes

○ No

What is your gender?

○ Male

○ Female

What is your age?

[   ]

What is your zip code?

[   ]

What is your race?

○ African-American, Black

○ Asian

○ Hispanic, Latino

○ Native American, American Indian

○ White

What is the highest level of education you have reached?

○ High school degree or less

○ Some college

○ Bachelor's degree or more

What is your annual income?

○ $30,000 or less, annually

○ $30,001 - $74,999 annually

○ $75,000 or greater, annually

○ prefer not to answer

In order to receive the gift card, please enter your contact information below.

Thank you!

Your Name:

[   ]

179

Your mailing address:

Your email address:

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

180

Appendix B.

Telephone Interview Instrument

** The semi-structured questions posed to each interview participant were drawn from their specific responses to an online survey conducted by the researcher in March. The interviews were intended to provide context and depth of understanding to survey responses. Follow-up questions were also posed in response to interview participants' verbal answers.

Why is a (computer/tablet/smartphone) your main device for reading digital news?

What features of this device makes it your choice for digital news?

You indicated that you enjoy keeping up with the news (some/a lot) – can you explain how getting digital news on a (computer/tablet/smartphone) is or is not part of that enjoyment?

Is there anything you don't like about receiving news on a (computer/tablet/smartphone)?

Do you ever share digital news with friends and family via email?

When you did share digital news by email, what led you to do that? (examples solicited)

Do you ever share digital news with friends and family via social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or Google Plus?

When you did share digital news by social media, what led you to do that? (examples solicited)

Why did you previously indicate you were likely/unlikely to share digital news with friends and family?

Why did you previously indicate that you were likely/unlikely to post your own news stories, photos or video if offered the opportunity?

How do you define news? What is news to you?

You indicated that you read (local news/U.S. and world news/sports/etc.) MOST via digital news. Can you explain why?

You indicated that (philly.com/inquirer.com/Inquirer replica edition) is your main digital news source. Why did you chose this over other choices?

You indicated you get digital news on a tablet or smartphone from The Philadelphia Inquirer, the Philadelphia Daily News, or philly.com (once a day, more than once a day) … can you describe your habits – do you check these news sites at a specific time each day, or from a specific location, or during a specific event in your day?

You indicated that when choosing to get digital news, (most recent news/traditional "print-like") experience is MOST important to you. Can you explain why?

What does a traditional "print-like" experience mean to you?

How do you read your favorite digital source? Please describe where on the site you begin and how do you navigate through the content? (If this question needed further explication, the interview participant was asked: Do you start at page one and flip page by page? Do you skip around?)

Why do you choose to read XX digital source from the Inquirer? (credible/trustworthy/balanced/objective/accurate)

Did you grow up in a home that received delivery of the Inquirer, the Daily News, or some other newspaper?

How long have you subscribed to the Inquirer (both digital and print, if applicable).

REFERENCES

Abdulla, R. A., Garrison, B., Salwen, M. B., Driscoll, P. D., & Casey, D. (2005). Online news credibility. *Online news and the public*, 148-163.

Abdulla, R. A., Garrison, B., Salwen, M., Driscoll, P., & Casey, D. (2002, August). The credibility of newspapers, television news, and online news. In *Education in Journalism Annual Convention, Florida USA*.

Bardoel, J., & Deuze, M. (2001). Network Journalism: converging competences of old and new media professionals. *Australian Journalism Review*, *23*(2), 91-103.

Barnhurst, K. G. (2012). The form of online news in the mainstream US press, 2001–2010. *Journalism Studies*, *13*(5-6), 791-800.

Barnhurst, K. G. (2010). The form of reports on US newspaper Internet sites, an update. *Journalism Studies*, *11*(4), 555-566.

Barnhurst, K. G., & Nerone, J. C. (2001). *The form of news: A history*. Guilford Press.

Benkler, Y. (2006) *The Wealth of Networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*. Yale University Press.

Benton, J. (2014). The leaked New York Times Innovation report is one of the key documents of this media age. *Neiman Journalism Lab.* Retrieved from: http://www.niemanlab.org/2014/05/the-leaked-new-york-times-innovation-report-is-one-of-the-key-documents-of-this-media-age/

Bercovici, J. (2014). Buzzfeed is officially a case study in media industry disruption. *Forbes.* Retrieved from: http://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffbercovici/2014/07/07/buzzfeed-is-officially-a-case-study-in-media-industry-disruption/

Berelson, B. (1948). What missing the newspaper means. *Communications research*, *1949*, 111-129.

Bermejo, F. (2009). Audience manufacture in historical perspective: From broadcasting to Google. *New Media & Society* 11(1&2), 133-154.

Bird, S. E. (2011). All we all produsers now? *Cultural Studies,* 25(4-5), pp. 502-516.

Blumenthal, J. (2014a). Ex-philly.com exec criticizes Inquirer's 'faction of old ideas.' *Philadelphia Business Journal.* Retrieved from http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/blog/jeff-blumenthal/2014/06/ex-philly-com-leader-criticizes-inquirers-faction.html?page=all

Blumenthal, J. (2014b). Lenfest picks interim leader for philly.com. *Philadelphia Business Journal.* Retrieved from http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/morning_roundup/2014/06/lenfest-picks-interim-leader-for-philly-com.html?page=all

Boczkowski, P. J. (1999). Mutual shaping of users and technologies in a national virtual community. *Journal of Communication*, *49*(2), 86-108.

Boczkowski, P. J. (2004). The mutual shaping of technology and society in videotex newspapers: Beyond the diffusion and social shaping perspectives.*The Information Society*, *20*(4), 255-267.

Boczkowski, P. J. (2005). *Digitizing the news: Innovation in online newspapers*. MIT Press.

Bolter, J.D., & Grusin, R. (1999) *Remediation: Understanding New Media.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Breed, W. (1955). Newspaper 'opinion leaders' and processes of standardization. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *32*(3), 277-328.

Brenner, J. (2013). Pew Internet: Mobile. http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/February/Pew-Internet-Mobile.aspx

Bruns, A. (2006) Towards Produsage: Futures for User-Led Content Production, [online] Available at: http://eprints.qut.edu.au/4863/1/4863_1.pdf, 1_10 (accessed 24 May 2010).

Bruns, A. (2008). *Blogs, Wikipedia, Second Life, and Beyond: From Production to Produsage.* New York: Peter Lang.

Bruns, A. (2010). Exploring the Pro-Am interface between production and produsage. *Proceedings of The Internet Turning 40: The Never-Ending Novelty of New Media Research?* http://eprints.qut.edu.au/39505/1/c39505.pdf

Bruns, A. and J. Schmidt (2011). Produsage: A Closer Look at Continuing Developments. *Editorial, Special Issue: Exploring Produsage. New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia 17(1): pp. 3-7.* Retrieved from www.produsage.org

Budiu, R., & Nielsen, J. (2012). Mobile Website and Application Usability.

Carr, D. (2010). "The media equation: A savior in the form of a tablet." *The New York Times*, Jan. 3, 2010. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/04/business/media/04carr.html?_r=0

Carr, D. (2013). "Philadelphia newspaper's owners at war." *The New York Times,* Oct. 13, 2013. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/business/media/philadelphia-newspapers-owners-at-war.html?pagewanted=all

Christensen, C. M. (2006). The ongoing process of building a theory of disruption. *Journal of Product innovation management*, *23*(1), 39-55.

Chung, D. S. (2008). Interactive features of online newspapers: Identifying patterns and predicting use of engaged readers. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *13*(3), 658-679.

Chung, D. S., & Nah, S. (2009). The effects of interactive news presentation on perceived user satisfaction of online community newspapers. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *14*(4), 855-874.

Chung, D. S., & Yoo, C. Y. (2008). Audience motivations for using interactive features: Distinguishing use of different types of interactivity on an online newspaper. *Mass Communication and Society*, *11*(4), 375-397.

Chyi, H. I., & Chadha, M. (2011, April). News on new devices: Examining multiplatform news consumption in the digital age. In *International Symposium on Online Journalism, Austin, Texas*.

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2007). Designing and conducting mixed methods research.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 209-240.

Dale, M. (2014). New Philadelphia Inquirer owner wants newspapers to be his legacy. Retrieved from http://bigstory.ap.org/article/owner-philly-newspapers-will-be-vital-legacy

Deuze, M. (2009). Journalism, citizenship, and digital culture. In Papacharissi, Z. (Ed.), *Journalism and citizenship: new agendas in communication*. New York: Routledge.

Dochterman, M. A., & Stamp, G. H. (2010). Part 1: The Determination of Web Credibility: A Thematic Analysis of Web User's Judgments. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, *11*(1), 37-43.

The Economist (Oct. 29, 2009). America's Struggling Newspapers: Big is Best. Retrieved from http://www.economist.com/node/14770135

Elliott, W. R., & Rosenberg, W. L. (1987). The 1985 Philadelphia newspaper strike: A uses and gratifications study. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *64*(4), 679-687.

Ellis, J. (2014). The mobile inevitability. Nieman Journalism Lab. Retrieved from: http://www.niemanlab.org/2014/01/the-mobile-inevitability-how-cnn-is-prepping-for-the-majority-mobile-audience-coming-in-2014/

Enda, J. (2011). Retreating from the world. *AJR-American Journalism Review*, *33*(1), 20. Retrieved from: http://ajrarchive.org/article.asp?id=4985

Fidler, R. (2014). RJI Mobile Media Research Report 3. Retrieved from: http://www.rjionline.org/research/rji-mobile-media-project/2014-q1-research-report-3

Fidler, R. (2012). 2012 Mobile Survey Results. Retrieved from http://rjionline.org/news/2012-rji-mobile-media-news-consumption-survey-description

Fischer, C. (1992). *America Calling: A Social History of the Telephone to 1940.* Berekeley, CA: University of California Press.

Fiske, J. (1987). Active audiences. *Television culture.* (pp. 62-83). New York: Taylor & Francis.

Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2007). The role of site features, user attributes, and information verification behaviors on the perceived credibility of web-based information. *New Media & Society*, *9*(2), 319-342.

Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2001). Internet use in the contemporary media environment. *Human communication research*, *27*(1), 153-181.

Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2000). Perceptions of Internet information credibility. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *77*(3), 515-540.

Fuchs, C. (2010). Class, knowledge and new media. *Media, culture, and society*, *32*(1), 141-150.

Fuchs, C. (2009). Information and communication technologies and society: A contribution to the critique of the political economy of the Internet. *European Journal of Communication* 24(1), 69-87.

Fulton, K. (1996). A tour of our uncertain future. *Columbia Journalism Review,* 34 (6), pp. 19-26.

Gans, H. J. (1979). *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, Newsweek, and Time*. Northwestern University Press.

Garrison, B. (2001). Diffusion of online information technologies in newspaper newsrooms. *Journalism*, *2*(2), 221-239.

Gieber, W. (1956). Across the desk: A study of 16 telegraph editors.*Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *33*(4), 423-432.

Goffman, E. (1959). The presentation of self in everyday life.

Hall, S. (2001). Encoding/decoding. In Durham, M.G. & Kellner, D.M. (Eds). *Media and cultural studies: key works* (pp166-176). New York: Blackwell.

Halliday, J. (2010). Technology blog: Mobile internet use will 'outstrip' desktop use by 2014, says ex-Obama advisor. *The Guardian.* Sept. 30, 2010. Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/blog/2010/sep/30/mobile-internet-overtake-desktop

Hutchby, I. (2001). Technologies, texts and affordances. *Sociology*, *35*(2), 441-456.

Incollingo, J.S. & Yaros, R. (2013). *Comparing a "traditional newspaper" versus a "contemporary mobile" format: Does format on a mobile tablet affect user perception and engagement.* Unpublished manuscript, Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park.

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Star Trek* rerun, reread, rewritten: fan writing as textual poaching. *Fans, bloggers, and gamers: Exploring participatory culture* (pp. 470-494).   New York: NYU Press.

Jeong, W., & Han, H. J. (2012). Usability study on newspaper mobile websites.*OCLC Systems & Services*, *28*(4), 180-198.

Jick, T. D. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Triangulation in action. *Administrative science quarterly*, 602-611.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, *1*(2), 112-133.

Johnson, T. J., & Kaye, B. K. (1998). Cruising is believing?: Comparing Internet and traditional sources on media credibility measures. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *75*(2), 325-340.

Kalyanaraman, S., & Sundar, S. S. (2006). The psychological appeal of personalized content in web portals: Does customization affect attitudes and behavior? Journal of Communication, 31, 254-270.

Kotler, P. (1986). The prosumer movement: A new challenge for marketers.*Advances in Consumer Research*, *13*(1), 510-513.

LaRose, R. and Eastin, M.S. (2004). A social cognitive theory of internet use and gratifications: toward a new model of media attendance. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media,* 48 (3), pp. 358-377.

Lee, A. M. (2013). News Audiences Revisited: Theorizing the Link Between Audience Motivations and News Consumption. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *57*(3), 300-317.

Lepore, J. (2014). The disruption machine. *The New Yorker.* Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/06/23/the-disruption-machine

Leung, L., & Wei, R. (2000). More than just talk on the move: Uses and gratifications of the cellular phone. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *77*(2), 308-320.

Liebes, T. (2005). Viewing and reviewing the audience: fashions in communication research. In Curran, J., & Gurevitch, M. (Eds). *Mass media and society,* 4th ed. (pp. 356-374). New York: Oxford University Press.

Lievrouw, L. A. (2002). Determination and contingency in new media development: Diffusion of innovations and social shaping of technology perspectives. *Handbook of new media: Social shaping and consequences of ICTs*, 183-199.

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2011). Sensemaking: qualitative data analysis and interpretation. *Qualitative communication research methods*, *3*, 241-281.

Livingstone, S. (2003) 'The changing nature of audiences: from the mass audience to the interactive media user.' In Valdivia, A.N., (Ed.) *A companion to media studies* (pp. 337-359). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Madianou, M. (2009). Audience reception and news in everydaylLife. In Wahl-Jorgenson, K., & Hanitzsch, T., (Eds.) *The handbook of journalism studies* (pp. 325-337). New York: Routledge.

Mersey, R. D., Malthouse, E. C., & Calder, B. J. (2012). Focusing on the Reader Engagement Trumps Satisfaction. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *89*(4), 695-709.

Mersey, R. D., Malthouse, E. C., & Calder, B. J. (2010). ENGAGEMENT WITH ONLINE MEDIA. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, *7*(2).

Mertens, D. M. (2003). Mixed methods and the politics of human research: The transformative-emancipatory perspective. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*, 135-164.

McLuhan, H. M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

McLuhan, H.M. (1962). *The Gutenberg galaxy.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory, 6th ed.* (p. 395-449. Los Angeles: Sage.

Mitchell, A., Rosentiel, T., Santhanam, L.H., & Christian, L. (2012). The future of mobile news. *Pew Research Center, Project for Excellence in Journalism.* Retrieved from http://www.journalism.org/analysis_report/future_mobile_news

Mitchelstein, E., & Boczkowski, P. J. (2010). Online news consumption research: An assessment of past work and an agenda for the future. *New Media & Society*.

Morse, J. M. (2012). *Readme first for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. Sage publications.

Nabi, R. L., & Krcmar, M. (2004). Conceptualizing media enjoyment as attitude: Implications for mass media effects research. *Communication Theory*, *14*(4), 288-310.

Nash, J., & Hoffman, L. H. (2009). Explaining the gap: The interaction of gender and news enjoyment in predicting political knowledge. *Communication Research Reports*, *26*(2), 114-122.

The New York Times (2014). "Innovation" report. Retrieved from http://mashable.com/2014/05/16/full-new-york-times-innovation-report/

Nielsen, J., & Budiu, R. (2010). Usability of iPad apps and websites. *First Research*.

O'Toole, J. (2014). "Mobile apps overtake PC Internet usage in U.S." Retrived from: http://money.cnn.com/2014/02/28/technology/mobile/mobile-apps-internet/

Palfrey, J. (2006). How Digital Natives Experience the News.

Papacharissi, Z., & Rubin, A. M. (2000). Predictors of Internet use. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *44*(2), 175-196.

Pew Internet Research. Cell Phone and Smartphone Ownership Demographics. Jan. 2014.
http://www.pewinternet.org/data-trend/mobile/cell-phone-and-smartphone-ownership-demographics/

Pew Research Center for People and the Press (2010). Americans Spending More Time Following the News. Retrieved from: http://www.people-press.org/2010/09/12/section-1-watching-reading-and-listening-to-the-news/

Pew Research Center (2012). State of the News Media 2012. Retrieved from: http://www.pewresearch.org/2012/03/19/state-of-the-news-media-2012/

Pew Research Center (2013). State of the News Media 2013. Retrieved from: http://stateofthemedia.org/2013/overview-5/

Pew Research Center (2014). State of the News Media 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.journalism.org/packages/state-of-the-news-media-2014/

Pew Research Center (2014). Internet Project. Retrieved from: http://www.pewinternet.org/data-trend/mobile/device-ownership/

Palser, B. (2011). "Will the iPad save print?" *American Journalism Review*, June/July 2011.

Plano Clark, V. L., & Creswell, J. W. (2008). The mixed methods reader.*Thousand Oaks et al.: Sage*.

Prahalad, C.K. and V. Ramaswamy (2004a). *The Future of Competition: Co-Creating Unique Value With Customers*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Prahalad, C.K. and V. Ramaswamy (2004b). Co-creation experiences: The next practice in value creation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 18(3), pp. 5-14.

Prahalad, C.K. and V. Ramaswamy (2003). "The New Frontier of Experience Innovation." *MIT Sloan Management Review*, Summer 2003, pp. 12-18.

Prahalad, C.K. and V. Ramaswamy (2002). "The Co-Creation Connection." *Strategy+Business*, Second Quarter 2002, Issue 27.

Prahalad, C.K. and V. Ramaswamy (2000). "Co-Opting Customer Competence." *Harvard Business Review*, January-February 2000, pp. 79-87.

Quandt, T., & Singer, J. B. (2009). Convergence and cross-platform content production. *Handbook of journalism studies*, 130-144.

Rainie, L. (2012). 25% of American Adults Own Tablet Computers. *Pew Internet & American Life Project (Pew Research Center)*.

http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Tablet-Ownership-August-2012/Findings.aspx

Rainie, L. (2012). Tablet and e-book reader ownership nearly double over the holiday gift-giving period. *Tablet*.

Rey, P. J. (2012). Alienation, Exploitation, and Social Media. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *56*(4), 399-420

Ritzer, G., Dean, P., & Jurgenson, N. (2012). The Coming of Age of the Prosumer. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *56*(4), 379-398.

Ritzer, G. and Jurgenson, N. (2010). "Production, consumption, prosumption: The nature of capitalism in the age of the digital 'prosumer'." *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 10(1), 13-36.

Robinson, S., & Mendelson, A. L. (2012). A Qualitative Experiment Research on Mediated Meaning Construction Using a Hybrid Approach. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *6*(4), 332-347.

Rogers, E. M. (2003). *Diffusion of innovations*. Simon and Schuster.

Rosen, J. (2006). The People Formerly Known as the Audience, [online] *PressThink*. Available at: http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2006/06/27/ ppl_frmr.htm

Rubin, A. M. (1993). Audience activity and media use. *Communications Monographs*, *60*(1), 98-105.

Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and gratifications theory in the 21st century. *Mass communication & society*, *3*(1), 3-37.

Schudson, M. (1997). The sociology of news production. *Social meanings of news: A text-reader*, 7-22.

Schulte, B. (2010). "Looking Up." *American Journalism Review*, June-July, 2010.

Shaw, N. (1999). The Method is the Message: Rethinking McLuhan Through Critical Theory. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *24*(1).

Shoemaker, P. J., Vos, T. P., & Reese, S. D. (2008). Journalists as gatekeepers. *Handbook of journalism studies*, 73-87.

Siles, I., & Boczkowski, P. J. (2012). Making sense of the newspaper crisis: A critical assessment of existing research and an agenda for future work. *New Media & Society*, 1461444812455148. Retrieved from http://isiles.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Siles_Boczkowski_Newspaper_crisis_web.pdf

Singer, J. B. (2001). The metro wide Web: Changes in newspapers' gatekeeping role online. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *78*(1), 65-80.

Singer, J. B. (2006). Stepping back from the gate: Online newspaper editors and the co-production of content in campaign 2004. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *83*(2), 265-280.

Singer, J. B., Domingo, D., Heinonen, A., Hermida, A., Paulussen, S., Quandt, T., ... & Vujnovic, M. (2011). *Participatory journalism: Guarding open gates at online newspapers*. John Wiley & Sons.

Smith, A. (2010). Americans and their gadgets. Retrieved from http://www.pewinternet.org/2010/10/14/americans-and-their-gadgets/

Smythe, D. (1977). Communications: the blindspot of western Marxism. *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* 1, 120-127.

Smythe, D. W. (2001). On the audience commodity and its work. In M. G. Durham & D. M. Kellner (Eds.), *Media and cultural studies: Keyworks* (pp. 253-279). New York: Blackwell. (Original work published 1981.)

Sundar, S. S., & Limperos, A. M. (2013). Uses and grats 2.0: New gratifications for new media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *57*(4), 504-525.

Sunstein, C. R. (2009). *Republic. com 2.0*. Princeton University Press.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2003). Major issues and controveries inthe use of mixed methods in the social and behvioral sciences. *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research*, 3-50.

Toffler, A. (1980). *The Third Wave*. New York: William Morrow & Company.

Trumbo, C. W. (2004). Research methods in mass communication research: A census of eight journals 1990–2000. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *81*(2), 417-436.

Van Dijck, J. (2009). Users like you? Theorizing agency in user-generated content. *Media, culture, and society*, *31*(1), 41.

Vincent, R. C., & Basil, M. D. (1997). College students' news gratifications, media use, and current events knowledge. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *41*(3), 380-392.

Wei, R., & Lo, V. H. (2006). Staying connected while on the move Cell phone use and social connectedness. *New Media & Society*, *8*(1), 53-72.

White, D. M. (1950). *The "gate keeper": A case study in the selection of news*(pp. 143-159). na.

Williams, B. A., & Carpini, M. X. D. (2004). Monica and Bill All the Time and Everywhere The Collapse of Gatekeeping and Agenda Setting in the New Media Environment. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *47*(9), 1208-1230.

Williams, R. (1967). Paradoxically, if the book works it to some extent annihilates itself. *McLuhan hot and cool*, 188-191.

Yaros, R. A. (2006). Is it the medium or the message? Structuring complex news to enhance engagement and situational understanding by nonexperts.*Communication Research*, *33*(4), 285-309.

Yoo, C.Y. (2011). Modeling audience interactivity as the gratification-seeking process in online newspapers. *Communication Theory*, 21(1), 67-89.

York, C. (2013). Overloaded By the News: Effects of News Exposure and Enjoyment on Reporting Information Overload. *Communication Research Reports*, *30*(4), 282-292.

Zickuhr, Kathryn and Lee Rainie. E-Reading Rises as Device Ownership Jumps. Jan. 16, 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/01/16/e-reading-rises-as-device-ownership-jumps/