Annotated Bibliography

JRN527 – Assessment Two

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Introduction

The urge to discover the truth and to disseminate that truth is a trait any good journalist has, but it is most clearly evident in the subfield of the industry, 'Investigative journalism'. The following annotated bibliography relates to the research question "What place does investigative journalism have in a digital society?" There are many aspects of this question that must be explored in order for it to be answered productively, including the digitisation of society, audience interaction with investigative journalism and whether the industry is still required in a modern world. Through the rise of digital technology, communication between the media and the audience is evolving into a more interactive domain, which plays a large role in unravelling the above research question. Furthermore, technology development has resulted in societal changes, causing the theoretical perspective of journalism, known as the Fourth Estate, to be challenged. This shift calls the function of investigative journalism in a modern society into question. Initial enquiries into the investigative journalism industry found little information about recent journalistic presentation methods, such as podcasts, and the way they engage an audience. The American podcast "Serial" has proven to be a pioneer for digital investigative journalism presentation methods, to better engage an audience with serious crime stories, and it serves as inspiration for this research project. Through undertaking a case study analysis of a popular Australian podcast called "The Teacher's Pet", it's hoped the above research question can be answered, as well as open the door for further research into podcasts and the impact they may have on investigative journalism.

Discipline Specific Texts

Summary:

The following discipline specific texts provide an excellent representation of the overall state of journalism in the present day. Each text offers a different perspective on the current circumstances of the discipline, including technological changes, media as an evolving analytical concept, and how journalism benefits the society. All texts are credible, and are either peer-reviewed or supported through literary data produced in each source, which therefore positions my proposed research project in the scholarly field. Taking my research question into account, of the current place investigative journalism has in a digital society, technological perspectives will feature heavily in my project, and this has been a major influence in choosing the following discipline-specific texts. These sources demonstrate a noticeable trend in journalism research, about the ongoing influence that technology has on the industry, and will all contribute to my exploration of digital presentation methods to engage an audience. While the following texts have differing angles relating to the various conditions of the industry, as a whole, they offer a comprehensive outlook on the current state of journalism.

Burns, L., & Matthews, B. (2018). *Understanding journalism* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Burns and Mathews provide an up-to-date, and informative guide, ideally for practising and student journalists. They offer detail into 21st-century journalism, by outlining the fundamentals of reporting and the importance of technological advances in the sector. The authors acknowledge the rise of new media forms, explaining in detail their significance ~~as~~ and their consequences, which will be helpful background knowledge for my own research

into digital investigative journalism. The authors also note the influence the industry has had on society, which will benefit my exploration of investigative journalism in a modern, more digitized world. The texbook doesn't contain a significant amount of information on investigative journalism specifically but will assist my research by providing context to the current state of journalism, rather than being the main basis of my dissertation.

Newman, N. (2019). *Digital News Project*. Reuters Institute. Retrieved from

https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-

01/Newman_Predictions_2019_FINAL_2.pdf

Newman offers a technological viewpoint on the current trends in the journalism industry, as well as future predictions for the sector. The report is extensive and contains a 'mixed methods' research approach, with input from 200 news organisations and individuals from 29 different countries, and is the most up-to-date document of its kind. Newman outlines several topics including key journalistic trends, the economic outlook for the industry and it's technological future. This information will be instrumental in my exploration of digital investigative journalism techniques. The text repeatedly mentions the growing trend of podcasts in news media and since my work will focus on digital journalism techniques, this source will be particularly useful in framing initial research into my topic. There is a significant element of speculation within this report, which could lead to inconsistency with information. However, it also contains facts about the aforementioned topics via data collection, which can't be disputed.

Donsbach, W. (2015). *The concise encyclopedia of communication*. Malden, MA: Wiley

    Blackwell. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary-wiley-

    com.ezproxy.csu.edu.au/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781118789353

This book is a concise collection of key communication methods, theories and objects of study, primarily for scholars who are studying or teaching in all aspects of communication. It's an up to date, shortened version, of the twelve-volume International Encyclopedia of Communication (2008), written by credible scholars in the communication sector. It provides an overview of the current state of journalism, via numerous topics, including digital and investigative reporting. This source will allow me to broaden my knowledge, on a number of journalistic topics and will function as a first step in obtaining a core understanding in areas relating to my own research. Whilst the text is extremely long and detailed, it is conveniently available online, therefore I will be able to digitally search keywords to find specific information.

Larrondo Ureta, A., & Peña Fernández, S. (2017). Keeping pace with journalism training in

    the age of social media and convergence: How worthwhile is it to teach online skills?.

    Journalism, *19*(6), 877-891. doi: 10.1177/1464884917743174

This peer-reviewed journal article analyses the current teaching techniques of convergent journalism to higher education students, and more broadly, the technological skill set required for modern reporting. The authors' aim is to contribute to the debate about the need for modernised education methods in both traditional and new media (p. 879). The study uses qualitative research methods and is a current example of what universities are teaching journalism students. This text will be particularly useful for my own research because it serves as an example of the expectations of present and future journalists,

regarding media convergence. The basis of my dissertation will be solely focused on digital approaches to reporting, such as podcasts, which require media convergence of both traditional and newer methods of investigating and presenting. Incorporating this 21st-century context into my own research will be important to my exploration of the value of investigative journalism in modern society because it reinforces the need for digital journalistic methods to engage a technologically evolving society.

Research Methods Texts

Summary:

The following research methods texts were chosen for their common use in the field of journalism, as well as their relation to investigative journalism particularly in a digital sphere. The sources provide an overview of different theoretical perspectives that are frequently used in industry research, particularly how they have changed with the evolution of digital media. These texts indicate a shift in how journalism as the Fourth Estate is perceived in a modern, more digitised society, and discuss how that shift affects journalists' role as the gatekeepers of information. In addition, a singular text provides a different theoretical perspective called the Social Responsibility Theory, which argues that the press has a responsibility to the public to portray the world accurately and to contribute to society's well being. The two perspectives are similar in nature, and combining them will strengthen the theoretical lens for my own research.

Felle, T. (2015). Digital watchdogs? Data reporting and the news media's traditional 'fourth

    estate' function. *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, *17*(1), 85-96. doi:

    10.1177/1464884915593246

This text examined the impact of digital data reporting on the traditional role of journalism as the Fourth Estate, through the use of a qualitative research method. The author used a small and purposeful sample size, conducting interviews with specific data journalists from various countries, all of which placed their work within the sphere of investigative journalism. The aim was to analyse new journalistic methods of investigating and storytelling in order to inform and engage an audience on a large scale. This text has no specific mention of the digital presentation methods I will be exploring in my own research, but it does discuss the importance of simplifying data in order to better engage with an audience (p. 92). This analysis will be valuable to my research, as I will be exploring the use of podcasts as a presentation method of investigative journalism, to better engage an audience living in a digital society. The text found that data journalism was a significant industry subfield that encouraged journalists to act as a watchdog on those in power. This text has broadened my understanding of the Fourth Estate in journalism by outlining what they call "textbook examples of investigative journalism in the public interest" (p. 90). It's also prompted me to explore how the theoretical perspective of journalism as the Fourth Estate could change as society becomes more digitised and digital news methods begin to evolve.

Landert, D., & Miscione, G. (2017). Narrating the stories of leaked data: The changing role

    of journalists after Wikileaks and Snowden. *Discourse, Context & Media*, *19*, 13-21.

    doi: 10.1016/j.dcm.2017.02.002

Landert and Miscione discuss how contemporary forms of whistleblowing changed the role of journalists as intermediaries between data and the general public. They relate two widely familiar whistleblowing cases, known as WikiLeaks and Snowden, using a qualitative comparative case study methodology, drawing heavily on previous studies. The research calls into question the role of journalists as the gatekeeper of information, concluding that the definition of the role has indeed shifted, but is still essential for the proper communication of leaked data (p. 19). The text is especially important to my own research because it highlights the importance of responsible reporting, in order for journalism to continue to act as the Fourth Estate, as well as serving as an excellent example of a case study research project. It gives me a better understanding of the direction my chosen theoretical perspective is going in terms of the digitisation of society, and in turn, where investigative journalism fits within this perspective.

McIntyre, K., Dahmen, N., & Abdenour, J. (2016). The contextualist function: US newspaper journalists value social responsibility. *Journalism*, *19*(12), 1657-1675. doi: 10.1177/1464884916683553

This text examined the attitudes of newspaper journalists in the United States about the idea of contextual reporting, which is journalism that "exemplifies commitment to the social responsibility theory of the press" (p. 1658), and contributes to the wellbeing of society. This theoretical perspective, whilst similar to journalism as the Fourth Estate, has challenged the intended lens for my own research and has prompted further exploration. The authors undertook a quantitative research method via the use of a multiple-contact survey, which asked participants five research questions in relation to contextual reporting and the characteristics of modern reporters. Results indicated that journalists highly value

portraying the world accurately, acting socially responsible, contributing to society's well being, and alerting the public of threats and opportunities (pp. 1670-1671), which suggests journalists are still strongly committed to the social responsibility theory of the press. This study relates to Landert and Miscione's research, which outlines the responsibility journalists have in assuring news clarity to prevent miscommunication; reaffirming the attitudes of present journalists about their role as the watchdog of society. The social responsibility theory of the press resembles my intended theoretical perspective, and it will likely play a large role throughout my own research into investigative journalism in a digital society.

Bruns, A. (2014). Gatekeeping, gatewatching, real-time feedback: new challenges for Journalism. *Brazilian Journalism Research*, *10*(2), 224-237. doi: 10.25200/bjr.v10n2.2014.778

Bruns in this text argues the case of a shift in the theoretical perspective of journalism as the gatekeeper of information, to gatewatcher of information. Using a qualitative research approach, Bruns discusses digitisation, especially in social media, and the development of a collaborative journalistic model, as the reasons behind this perspective shift. The aim of the research is to consider what it means to be a journalist in a modern society, because the audience can now "skip past news publications" to find a direct link to information (p. 229). The text has a strong focus on collaboration with the audience in order to continue acting as the Fourth Estate, however concludes that because of this collaboration, journalists must accept that this theoretical perspective has been irretrievably lost, and moulded into a gatewatching role. This text relates to Landert and Miscione's research because it outlines the need for journalists in a digital society, but it also highlights the

change in perspective. It's an important text for my own research, because it's evidence that a shift is taking place among audiences due to societal digitalisation, which will play a large part in my exploration of the place investigative journalist has in a modern society.

Specific Question Texts

Summary:

In order to select the following directly relevant texts, specific to my research, I first needed to break down my topic questions. My tentative area of research broadly centres on investigative journalism and its place in a modern society, but more specifically, it focuses on digital presentation methods and audience interaction, and the following texts represent these concepts. The use of podcasts as a presentation method for investigative journalism is a relatively new idea, with 'Serial' proving to be a breakout concept for long-form nonfiction. The majority of these sources use a quantitative research method, a trend that could influence the approach I take with my own study. They have been carefully selected based on their direct relevance to my research, the year they were published, and their scholarly credentials. This exploration of relevant texts has revealed a definite gap in knowledge regarding digital investigative journalism presentation methods and my research will promote discussion on the engaging benefits of these methods.

Carson, A., & Farhall, K. (2018). Understanding Collaborative Investigative Journalism in a "Post-Truth" Age. *Journalism Studies*, *19*(13), 1899-1911. doi: 10.1080/1461670x.2018.1494515

Carson and Farhall use mixed methods in this text to analyse the development of collaborative investigative journalism, via the use a qualitative sample sizes and interviews, as well as quantitative data research. They note the gap in knowledge about how technology advancements could increase the value of investigative journalism in modern newsrooms. Using the theoretical perspective put forward by Castells (2013), the text contrasts the positive and negative impacts technology has had on investigative journalism in modern society (p. 1900). The main argument emphasises the fact that digital rise has led to challenges in newsrooms but that "the digital media environment also heralds unprecedented opportunities for investigative journalism" (p. 1901). This text has a direct connection to my own research into investigative journalism and technology, and discusses where investigative journalism currently sits in modern society, through a technological and financial lens. It doesn't, however, mention specifically the digital investigative presentation methods I plan on analysing in my research, such as podcasts. Interestingly, the authors conclude the crucial need for the continuation of investigative journalism, which will be useful for my own analysis into the industry regarding the role investigative journalism plays in a digital society.

Rodríguez Gómez, E., & Sandoval-Martín, M. (2016). Interest and willingness to pay for investigative reporting: a solution for the crisis of journalism?. *Communication & Society*, 1-19. doi: 10.15581/003.29.1.1-19

The authors use a multistage methodological technique of quota sampling, to examine news consumers' current attitudes towards paying for investigative journalism. This text identifies the research that has already been completed on the shift towards online newspaper subscriptions, and the growing pressure of how to fund the industry (p. 3).

Pinpointing a gap in knowledge, the authors aim for the study is to highlight how investigative journalism could assist in providing economic opportunities in the sector and put forward two hypotheses. This texts' strengths in relation to my own research include its direct link to investigative journalism and it shows a glimpse into the current opinions of a modern society paying for investigative journalism. It's also quantitative data, so it can be verified objectively. Whilst it proves to be a snapshot of the current views of news consumers, it has a limited scope of just one city in Spain, which means it cannot be a reflection of a wider population's attitudes on paying for investigative journalism. Despite this, the text will help me understand some current trends towards investigative journalism from a consumer perspective.

Lanosga, G., & Martin, J. (2016). Journalists, sources, and policy outcomes: Insights from three-plus decades of investigative reporting contest entries. *Journalism*, *19*(12), 1676-1693. doi: 10.1177/1464884916683555

Similar to Carson and Farhall (2018), this text uses data from entry materials for an annual investigative reporting contest, however Lanosga and Martin focus on solely on the United States. It uses quantitative research, examining primary documents of investigative reporting projects from 1976 through 2012. The text acknowledges previous studies of how investigative journalists do their work, but notes the need for additional empirical knowledge and longitudinal studies into policy results stemming from investigative reporting. One of the aims of this text is valuable because it offers an extension to my research on investigative journalism's role in a digital society, by adding what the sector already does for society. This text's scope spans what the authors call an array of media, including television, books, websites, and small news organizations, however, it doesn't

include modern investigative journalism presentation methods, such as podcasts. The study found investigative stories on TV were the most likely to produce a result than stories for other media, therefore it will be interesting to see how other digital methods fare in my own analyses.

Lanosga, G., & Houston, B. (2016). Spotlight. *Journalism Practice*, *11*(9), 1101-1120. doi: 10.1080/17512786.2016.1228472

Lanosga and Houston analyse the current position of investigative journalism, through a quantitative research approach of surveying mainly American investigative journalists. Of particular interest, is their analysis into the opinions of investigative journalists about the health of their industry. The data about this particular topic points to some confusion and uncertainty, in addition to positivity and optimism. Lanosga and Houston aimed to provide current data on investigative journalists' perceptions of their work and role in society, and concluded that their research provides the groundwork for further empirical and theoretical research into the area. My research will benefit from the text's quantitative methodology about journalism practice because it provides primary information on the current state of the industry branch, by investigative reporters themselves. It shares similarities with Lanosga and Martin's (2016) text in its research method and information sources, as well as building on that text by referring to the role investigative journalists play in society. However, there is no mention in the text of the digitisation of society and where that phenomenon leaves investigative journalism in the future. It's main use will be through a statistical lens on current points of view.

Gambarato, R., & Alzamora, G. (2018). *Exploring Transmedia Journalism in the Digital Age*. Hershey: IGI Global.

This book provides the latest research on multimedia journalism across various platforms using digital technologies. Chapter 11 is of the most interest to my research, as it focuses specifically on the analysis of a particular investigative journalism podcast, called "Serial" (p. 183). The chapter is a qualitative single case analysis and it explores the podcast through three specific contexts, all of which will prove extremely valuable to my research project due to their direct link to my proposed area of study. The authors propose that the podcast could serve as a starting point for what transmedia journalism would look like in the digital age (p. 184), which closely relates to my intended research on the role investigative journalism has in a modern, more digital society. The chapter ends with various different conclusions, and recommends further research in areas, including what the podcast's success means for the future of investigative journalism, the effects of direct engagement with the audience, and any ethical dilemmas that may arise. The text does note its own weaknesses, outlining its limited scope due to being based on a single case study. Nevertheless, I intend to draw inspiration from this text, and will consider carrying out my own research project with a similar approach, however, with my own analysis of an Australian investigative podcast called "The Teacher's Pet".

Berry, R. (2015). A Golden Age of Podcasting? Evaluating Serial in the Context of Podcast Histories. *Journal Of Radio & Audio Media*, *22*(2), 170-178. doi: 10.1080/19376529.2015.1083363

In this text, Berry analyses the podcast series Serial through the assertion that it was a breakout hit for the industry and that it arrived during the 'golden age of podcasting'. It

aimed to investigate the series through the history of podcasts, their technical change, as well as analyse its listenership. This aspect will be the most beneficial to my research, because through my exploration of the role of investigative journalism in a digital society, much of my focus will be on audience interaction with the industry. The author uses mixed research methods, but the approach is largely qualitative due to its context rich objective. Whilst relying heavily on previous research about podcasts, Berry also conducts a small scale survey to gain insight into why podcasts had recently become more popular. The survey provided a basis on how audiences enjoy podcasts, finding some people shared the listening experience with others for a "similar (even heightened) experience of collective listening" (p. 175). This text is relevant to my own studies because I will be focusing on new communication presentation methods, and the way that they help engage an audience.