

COMPARATIVE MODELS OF COOPERATIVE JOURNALISM

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Research Question:

What are the advantage and disadvantages of cooperative journalism between professional journalists? Between established newsrooms and journalism students? Between citizen reporters and journalists from an established media outlet? And finally, what can be gained from cooperation between non-journalism professionals and professional journalists?

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this study is to define the varying forms of cooperative journalism, its political implications, current uses, and potential ethical problems, and to determine if it is a viable option to counteract the decline of the traditional newsroom.

Variables I might introduce to expand the question include:

- Teaching methodology
- An examination of “pop-up” newsrooms, and other successful journalistic collaborations
- Differing ideas about who should collaborate
- Ethical and professional limitations
- Technological constraints
- Opportunities for more immediacy, in-depth coverage
- Potential to increase jobs and revenue
- Problems with ownership
- Implementation in other nations

### Hypothesis:

Newsrooms that have implemented collaborative journalism practices will be able to cut costs, reduce firings, contribute to a global conversation, and increase the breadth of their reporting.

### Introduction:

With the media having to adapt to non-traditional methods of news gathering in a 24 hour news cycle, many newsrooms have begun collaborating with other media and non-media professionals across the globe to increase their access to stories and sources. This sharing can take place between formerly competing newsrooms, between journalists and global professionals in a number of trades, in an educational setting between established journalists and eager journalism school students or between journalists and bloggers. The advantages and disadvantages of each pairing will be examined. For the purposes of this report, this collaboration will be referred to as “cooperative journalism.”

This cooperative journalism is not a new idea, and it is important to note the distinction between collaboration through choice and government mandated complicity. The cooperative methods of journalism chronicled in this paper is not be government mandated, though case studies of these countries and how their models of collaborative journalism differ from those proposed will be explored. Several pioneering media outlets have turned their competition into a shared network of resources. The internet has long been a place where any individual with a blog could become an expert on any number of topics. As journalism moves into a new age, one that is more technological than ever, it becomes increasingly important for media outlets to have

immediate, in-depth reporting. Staff in many newsrooms have been cut to make up for shrinking profit margins, and foreign correspondence and investigative journalism are expensive practices. Allowing reporting to become a synergistic activity would break down competitive barriers and increase the instantaneousness with which the news media could deliver news.

Accuracy, as always, would have to be a primary concern for all participating journalists and professionals. Blogs have gradually become a major news source for many consumers, and cooperation between individuals who may be experts in one field and a copy editor would help increase the credibility of the news presented on normally unvetted blogs. In the new models of cooperative journalism, it is often thought that sharing content automatically increases the number of edits it must necessarily go through, ensuring that consumers are receiving only the facts. Allowing student journalists access to professional newsrooms could possibly bring a fresh new perspective on technology to seasoned journalists, as well as allowing students to increase their technical proficiency and assist with basic reportage. Current examples of universities that have adopted these methods will be presented throughout this report.

This project will be a research-based study into what the issues facing professional journalists currently are, and how certain organizations have utilized cooperative methods to offset these issues. It will also be a theoretical examination of the possible value of cooperative journalism, and the problems it may present. The sources I have chosen to evaluate range from newsrooms that have begun partnering with former competitors, to avant-garde news organizations that are pioneering the “pop-up” newsroom (a portable journalistic base that utilizes professionals, freelancers, and civilians), and also, staunch supporters of more traditional

methods of news gathering and reporting. I will also be examining the limiting factors that may keep organizations interested in working together from being able to do so. Journalism has become part of a global conversation, and inequalities in freedom and technology may keep all nations from communicating as freely as possible.

A thorough examination of newsrooms that currently practice cooperative journalism, as well as an exploration of the factors of favorability for each of the four possibility combinations of collaborators, should show that newsroom could increase immediacy and credibility by looking outside of the traditional newsroom for answers.

#### Literature Review:

It is first important to delineate the differences between politically-mandated collaborative journalism and cooperative journalism between journalists exercising their First Amendment rights. In “The Fiji Media Decree: A Push Toward Collaborative Journalism,” Reggie Dutt examines the ways in which the strict limitations the Fijian government has imposed on their media have created a model of collaborative journalism. However, this model of cooperative journalism is only one example of this kind of interaction, “only as ‘collaboration as compliance’ which the authors believe is the ‘weakest and least compelling rationale for a collaborative role for the media’ (Dutt).

A 2009 publication by the University of Illinois called “Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies,” addressed the models of cooperative journalism. The authors believe that one of the main four roles of journalism in a society is to collaborate with those in power. The extent of this collaboration depends on the type of government present and to what

extent the journalists choose to collaborate. While they are several modes of cooperation, this paper is primarily concerned with “collaboration as acceptance” (Christians). They are practical and normative agreements that must take place within collaboration as acceptance, wherein “given what is known about particular circumstances, journalists judge cooperation to be right or proper” (Christians). This proposed form of cooperative journalism is the only one that this study is concerned with. While it is admittedly somewhat idealized, it allows for study of various forms cooperative journalism, while removing the unsavory political connotations present in countries with fewer media freedoms.

There are also hierarchical media structures that might hinder the implementation of cooperative journalism. However, instead of viewing these as limitations, journalists could perceive them as a way to shift of the established balances of power away from corporate owners and media conglomerates and back into the hands of the journalists. Daniel Perrin’s “There Are Two Different Stories to Tell - Collaborative Text-picture Production Strategies of TV Journalists” states that

Managers’ positions tend towards the following propositional reconstructions: “‘public service media institutions are not the institutions to solve social and pedagogical problems’”; “‘programming has to attract audience share in an increasingly competitive market’”; and “‘public service media need autonomy, not regulation of any kind’”. This means neglecting demands of public service in favor of market orientation. If the media organization were to act on such a position, it would clearly risk losing its status and the financial support as a public service provider (Perrin).

Perrin's report detailed many instances where journalists were limited in their coverage by a story by the demands of managers or editors. Cooperative journalism puts more power back into the hands of the journalists, the individuals that spend the most time with sources and stories, and would allow them to form and even more complete background with the help of a global network of like-minded professionals.

New studies have also found that the journalistic goal of complete objectivity (while not often realized) may not be the only effective way of gaining credibility with readers. "The Journalist Behind the News: Credibility of Straight, Collaborative, Opinionated and Blogged News" compared and contrasted reader opinions of news stories presented in the four formats. The study found that:

"Strong statistical significance was found for Hypothesis 1, that straight news stories would have the highest perceived levels of expertise. The greatest paired difference in expertise occurred between the straight news and blog conditions ( $t = 7.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but statistically significant differences also occurred between the straight news and opinionated ( $t = 3.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and straight news and collaborative conditions ( $t = 6.85$ ,  $p < .001$  both  $p < .001$ ). These findings suggest that adding opinion to a news story weakens the author's perceived expertise. The collaborative condition also ranked higher than the blog and opinionated conditions ( $t = 4.35$  and  $t = 4.62$  respectively;  $p < .001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2, that collaborative news would have high perceived levels of expertise by giving readers the ability to make sure the reporter tells the whole story.

Scores for both the opinionated and blog stories were low and not statistically significant from each other when compared (Meyer).

Because complete objectivity has become something of a journalistic pipe dream, these findings become extremely significant. Purely objective stories were the most highly respected, While bloggers and overly opinionated news stories still seem to lack credibility. However, collaborative stories were the second most respected, and stories that combined objectivity and collaboration might possible present the reader with a more complete version of the story, allowing them to form their own opinions.

Columbia Journalism Review's "All Together Now," states, "Collaboration is no silver bullet, but the potential upside is hard to deny. And if it makes people feel invested in serious journalism, then they will be more likely to support it" (All Together). The article states a belief that collaboration is integral to ensuring the ethical standards of professional journalism are included in new forms of media, such as blogging. Cooperation may increase public trust in media of all kinds. If journalists and bloggers work together, the immediacy of blogging and the ethical standards of professional journalism may eventually converge (All Together).

Many newsrooms have already implemented cooperative journalism in their newsroom. Of the four proposed cooperative groups, this paper will first examine the collaboration between groups of professional journalists. The St. Louis Journalism Review's "Business Models for a Battered Journalism Industry," found several arrangements that professional media enterprises could utilize to pool resources without decreasing competitiveness. Two or more organizations

can stagger their printing times, to eliminate having to pay for multiple days of printing.

Classifieds can be consolidated, distributions agents can be shared, and lastly, content can be shared. The Review found that “five newspapers in New York and New Jersey announced plans to share articles and photographs” as of February 2009 (Silverblatt). Additionally, NBS newsrooms in Chicago are partnering up with non-profit news organizations to supplement their content. This move to consolidate news resources within a city allows for decreases in cost, increases in content, and “fills many broadcast hours with valuable public service journalism” (Stelter). Public service journalism is often one of the casualties of financial cuts, it can often be expensive to produce and takes a backseat to the timeliness of breaking news. As staff sizes shrink, journalists become responsible for a greater volume of stories, and there are fewer reporters able to shoulder the responsibilities of many daily news stories, as well as on-going in-depth reports. NBC has the luxury of being able to make a donation to each of their new non-profit partners, but will then be able to take advantage of their “data-mining experts,” allowing the network to get a more complete snapshot of their city and the coverage citizens would most value most (Stelter). Chicago also pioneered a program that rewarded collaborative journalistic efforts for stories about issues threatening the city’s immigrant community. President of the Society for Professional Journalists, Irwin Gratz, said judges were impressed that the stories went deeper and had greater impact as a result of the collaboration between the two publications involved (Anonymous - Chicago). And in one of the most ingenious twists on cooperative reporting, USC Annenberg’s Arts Journalism Institute for Theater Launched a program called Engine 28. Engine 28 was a “pop-up” newsroom, or a satellite newsroom that is assembled near

the epicenter of an event, that draws on the expertise of journalists from a multitude of different publications. Journalists from 28 different publications took part in covering stories related to theater and the arts (USC).

“Rather than simply talk about new models for arts journalism at this year's NEA Arts Journalism Institute, we decided to create some," said Douglas McLennan, digital editor and chief architect for Engine28.com. "Engine28 is an exercise in 'what if' arts journalism. What if you could throw a large group of journalists at a subject and invent creative ways of covering it? Engine28 will be a real-time laboratory for journalism about the arts” (USC).

In Summer 2010, the BBC Monitoring Media covered the World Association of Newspapers' publication of the Million Dollar Strategies for Newspaper Companies (Anonymous - Global). The International Federation of Journalists immediately villanized the publication, as it called for mass firings, office consolidation, newspaper shrinkage, and fewer days of publication (Anonymous - Global). Allowing professional journalists to pool their resources might reduce the need for such drastic cutbacks, and might revitalize both the overburdened reporters and the image of the industry itself.

The second kind of cooperative journalism this paper will be analyzing is that which occurs between an established newsroom and a group of journalism students. Journalism schools are now confronted with a very serious issue. How is it possible to teach students the basics of such a rapidly changing environment? Professors themselves, whose reporting background may be from decades ago, find themselves having to learn new and increasingly complicated

technologies. The University of California, Berkeley, was one of the first universities to spearhead an effort to bring together seasoned vets and fresh-faced hopefuls. Cal, along with Harvard, Northwestern, and USC planned a “journalism improvement program that would create “incubator” work with major news outlets, create panels on problems facing the future of journalism (Burrell). The program, known as the “Carnegie-Knight initiative,” would also integrate professionals in the fields of supporting curriculums, such as law and philosophy, to fully round out the education of the student journalism (Burrell). Mercer University in Georgia also added the “medical school” model to their university journalism program (Knight). The Knight Foundation invested \$4.6 million dollars to build what is known as the CreateUnique Center for Collaborative Journalism. The program will allow students to work alongside The Macon Telegraph and Georgia Public Broadcasting, who will still retain their editorial independence (Knight). Alberto Ibarguen, president and CEO of the Knight Foundation, said:

“Journalism and news delivery must stay relevant to changing communities. To succeed, we need to let the technology take us to new places and experiment with new forms of collaboration,” said Alberto Ibarguen, president and CEO of Knight Foundation.

"Forging new ties between journalism [schools](#) and professional news organizations holds the promise of discovering new ways to inform and engage communities” (Knight).

Student journalists may also be able in aide in some of the more in-depth work that investigative journalism requires. Investigative stories are costly and time-consuming, and as the industry

grows increasingly unable or unwilling to fund them, they are disappearing from both the media and university curriculum. Boston University launched the New England Center for Investigative Reporting, which brought together established investigative journalists and college students (Boston). Students also are a source of energy and new ideas. News 21, also founded by Knight and Carnegie, “draws together 12 university journalism schools whose best students research and produce multimedia-based investigative stories” (The UniMuckraker).

A third potentially valuable partnership might occur between journalists and global professionals in specialized fields. News values timeliness and breaking stories might not allow the journalist enough time to develop specialized knowledge about the topic that they are reporting on. This is where reliance on sources becomes key, but established partnerships between a variety of professional might revolutionize the entire industry. The Washington Post experimented with this kind of a professional panel in 2006 (“PostGlobal”). PostGlobal is a panel blog that brings together some of the world’s foremost thinkers on topics like politics, economics, and international relations. The site explained:

“PostGlobal is an experiment in global journalism -- an ongoing discussion of international issues among dozens of the world's best-known writers, commentators, and editors. It aims to create a truly global dialogue, drawing on independent voices in the countries where news is happening -- from China to Iran, from South Africa to Saudi Arabia, from Mexico to India. Twice a week, [David](#) Ignatius of The Washington Post and Fareed Zakaria of Newsweek will pose a question to PostGlobal's diverse network of

experts in more than 30 countries. Their responses will reflect what the world thinks about important issues” (“PostGlobal).

These valuable professional collaborations can also take place between the producers and distributors of news. Though mainly journalists have are technologically-savvy, they can still take advantage of companies with the ability to distribute their stories more quickly and much, much farther. Scribble Tech, an on-line collaborative journalism company, worked with the United Kingdom’s Press Association to livestream the royal wedding of Kate Middleton and Prince William, allowing:

Journalists and contributors can report story elements from e-mail, SMS, Twitter, voice call or the ScribbleLive web interface - whether in the newsroom or out in the field. For the first time ever, organisations will be able to license real-time content and technology in one branded content [management system](#). Customer sites will be able to support embedded feeds, live-updating HTML pages and mobile interfaces with the latest news, pictures and video from the royal wedding. An enhanced package will be available to enable sites to create their own live reports” (Anonymous - Press).

The final collaboration this paper will be discussing is the most hotly disputed.

Professional journalists have long been opposed to recognizing citizen journalists. Blogs have opened up the amount of personal commentary available on the Internet, and reporters are often reluctant to recognize the validity of these sites as news sources. However, professional

journalists could harness the omnipresence of bloggers to immediately have information regarding events that are happening just fine. Osama Bin Laden's capture and death were first brought to the attention of the media through Tweets. Blogging and other forms of social media provide the immediacy that journalists crave, and citizen journalists may bring their knowledge of other industries or topics to the table. Writer Axel Bruns has coined a term called "producers" to describe these content contributors (Milberry). Bruns claims that these users push the current journalistic climate from one where journalists are the main source of content, to one where the pressure is on readers to sift through mounds of citizen-produced content to find what is true and relevant (Milberry). By working with professionals in the media industry, the amount of relevant information present on the web could be increased. There are many examples on the web of this kind of cooperative reporting. One such example would be the partnership between Helium and 1H2O. Helium, a citizen journalist collective, has partnered with the Knight Center and Independent Television Service to allow bloggers to cover global issues related to the safety of drinking water. Top articles will be picked by journalists at the Knight Center for the chance to win prizes. (Anonymous - Helium). The Creative Reporter Network is another example of successful aggregate citizen journalism. The Network is comprised of 50+ journalists. Most have credentials, but there is no formalized process to conduct background checks. Reporters do their own fact checking, and share ad revenue (Jones). These journalistic efforts could be improved by including professional fact checkers or copy editors, freeing up citizen reporters to take on more stories. Another example of the intersection between professionals and these producer/users also involves the cutting edge of technology. A PR Newswire report before Prince William's

marriage found that the UK Press Association had partnered with an online journalistic collaborative called ScribbleTech. This partnership allowed for livestreaming and web reports of the ceremony, as well as live updates by field reporters, and live discussion between Facebook and Twitter users (Anonymous - Press).

However, none of these cooperative options are without their flaws, and opponents to the idea of cooperative journalism have been very vocal. The previously cited American Behavioral Scientist studies cross-examined which types of media are most trusted by users, straight news, opinionated news, cooperative news, or blogging. Blogging was characterized by “writer’s opinion on a news topic but personal details and social cues about the writer captured in informal, colloquial language (Meyer). It was found that blogs and opinionated news were the least trusted ways of disseminating information. Professional journalists that oppose partnerships with blogs fear that the non-objective tone of bloggers might further decrease credibility in a world where the media still fights public distrust. Many don’t even think that journalists will be able to cede enough of their control over information to truly take part in a cooperative information environment. A Searcher article recently said “Journalism recently touts its importance as a key institution in providing the free flow of information needed to sustain a liberal democracy. The irony is that it argues against the kind of collaborative system Wikipedia and other social media represent, which I see as democratizing” (Herther). The same article went on to state that in a 2009 Pew Survey, the majority of Americans surveyed knew almost nothing about recent events, and that the possible fault with cooperative journalism is that it can count on uninformed citizens to disseminate incorrect information until it becomes “legitimized through

repetition” (Herther). Cooperative journalism also might lead to unintentional plagiarism, or obscure the lines between legitimate plagiarism and shared notes. Two sports reporter called for the dismissal of a rival reporter for the Boston Globe, claiming he had plagiarized another writer. The accused reporter claimed to have gotten notes from press conferences the writer whose quotes he allegedly stole also attended (George). The author refers to a phenomenon called a “notes collaborative,” where journalists will share notes of sources, and then are not able to prove appropriately that their work is their own (George).

#### Methodology:

The research technique utilized throughout this examination of cooperative journalism is the content analysis method. I gathered materials from peer reviewed journals, press releases, online stories from respected newspapers, journalism reviews, as well as case studies of journalistic practices in countries where cooperative journalism is state-controlled.

As cooperative journalism is a somewhat new idea in media, implementation has been limited, and mainly centered around journalism schools. This is not surprising information, as students of journalism tends to be more progressive, and call for newer technologies and updated methods of learning. Peer reviewed journals that have covered the topic of collaborative media have mainly done so as studies of ethics and politics of countries whose media is run by the government.

However, many scholarly articles have been written breaking down the differences between types of cooperative media, based on the level of government intervention present. For this report, it was important to establish that cooperative media did not mean “complicity” media, as this was not a report endorsing increased government intervention in reporting.

My research methods included analysis of records and case studies. The case studies I focused on were mainly analyses of cooperative journalism in countries like Fiji, where state-controlled media has created cooperative journalism by default (Dutt). I also analyzed peer reviewed surveys which compared and contrasted the credibility of various kinds of reported news, ranging from blogging to fully objective (Meyer).

Again, because the implementation of cooperative media has not been widespread, there are a number of issues that this paper will not be able to fully address until the consequences of collaboration of more known. For example, there is not much research being done on the financial aspects of cooperative journalism. Many media outlets may be concerned about profit losses that come from sharing stories, sources, or content with prior competitors, but the only examples of inter-newsroom sharing covered in this report occurred between affiliates of the same network, namely NBC stations in Chicago. (Stelter).

However, since this report is mainly a theoretical analysis of the potential benefits and pitfalls of content-sharing, the absence of qualitative data should not detract from its findings. Analyzing the implementation of cooperative journalism is based on factual data from trusted sources, and arguments regarding the ethics of making the switch from a traditional to progressive newsrooms, while quantitative, are still coming from trusted sources.

As there were ethical sources, it was important to understand that these were opinions of professionals in the industry, concerned about maintaining quality journalism alongside technological progress. Their opinions may not necessarily be shared by all professionals in the industry, but are valid as their own nonetheless.

Additionally, in order to analyze non-professional sources, such as blogs, it was necessary to label them as journalism. Though this title may be hotly contested, especially by seasoned veterans of the industry, its application was necessary in order to determine the benefits of utilizing their services.

These holistic analyses contributed to a larger picture of cooperative journalism as a viable option for traditional newsrooms looking for a way to modernize.

### Discussion:

In the current journalistic climate, where newsrooms are constantly suffering staff and advertising cutbacks, and funds for foreign correspondence and investigative stories are all but a thing of the past, cooperative journalism is a way to re-balance the budget without sacrificing more employees.

After examining the various combinations of professionals and citizens that could be present in the new newsrooms, there are several conclusions that should be drawn.

Firstly, cooperative journalism between journalists is simply a smart business move. Pooling resources reduces the heavy workload individual journalists are required to bear as part of a downsized newsroom, and it also allows them to pursue in-depth stories, increasing the credibility of their news organization. Cooperation between journalists would also allow increased reporter autonomy, allowing them to collaborate directly with one another to share relevant information and reach a greater number of sources. While profit may be an issue, NBC newsrooms in Chicago have partnered with community journalists, whose work is often disseminated for free (Stelter). This increases the breadth and depth of NBC's Chicago coverage

by combining NBS newsrooms in the area, as well as increasing their credibility by covering and partially funding community journalism, news that often falls by the wayside in major metropolitan areas. Many of these hyper-local community reporters are volunteers, with no motives other than to serve as a public good. There are stories in these areas that journalists often overlook. And progressive alternative newsrooms are great ideas for major events, such as awards shows or disasters. Engine28 was a great example of a “pop-up” newsroom, a temporary meeting place for reporters from various media outlets to collaboratively cover an event (USC). Even if newsrooms are not ready to dive headfirst into collaborating with former competitors, they can set aside their differences in special circumstances to offer their readers the most thorough coverage of an event. Doing so will not only lessen the strain on newsroom budgets by allowing them to pool resources, but it will also go a long way to heal the strained relationship between media consumers and producers. Offering timely, unbiased, and accurate reporting from all angles of an issue will increase journalistic credibility, and might decrease the industry’s reputation as being profit-, and not news-, driven. However, it is naive to assume that profit should not be a motive for newsrooms, especially as the industry undergoes rapid and systematic change. Cooperation between newsrooms does not have to mean full reporting complicity. Collaborating can be as simple as sharing presses with competitors, consolidating classifieds, or utilizing the same distribution agent (Silverblatt). Enrollment in collegiate journalism programs has remained high, despite the flux in the industry. Flux, given the current climate, is most likely a generous word. With fewer positions available

for veteran reporters, students must learn to do more, work harder, and play smarter than many generations of aspiring media professionals before them. The industry must look to this generation for a revitalization of the old business models. Very few people are reading their local newspaper over breakfast in today's day and age, foregoing ink and paper for online scanning, and young journalists were raised in an age of technology. However, a strong background in social media and writing for the web will not provide a strong basis for a career. Today's journalists must still know how to write well and objectively, and must be as adept at covering town hall meetings as they are with international disasters. This is where collaboration between established newsrooms and college journalism programs can and must be implemented. There are innumerable lessons to be learned from the old models of news reporting (timeliness, tact, building relationships with sources, and ethics being just a few) and too often these fall by the wayside in a modern journalism curriculum. By allowing students to learn and report in new newsrooms, they can gain experience, respect tradition, and also see more efficient, forward-thinking ways of producing and disseminating news. Students can more effectively learn and professionals may be able to view journalism through a newer, more progressive lens.

By combining the efforts of journalists and non-media professionals, journalists can increase the legitimacy of their stories without sacrificing the time they spend on other pieces. Journalists may be adept at gathering interviews and organizing facts, but many are not given ample time to become experts on a particular topic within a story. While research is encouraged and cannot be disregarded even in the case of collaboration, it can be time consuming, especially in

complicated stories. By involving global professionals in issues that are diverse, complex, and meaningful, reporters and readers alike can be sure that they are adequately covering issues as they arise. This “panel” journalism was successfully implemented by the Washington Post, where Post and Newsweek editors posed questions to an international panel (PostGlobal).

Though PostGlobal is now defunct, when it ran it had a lively readership, and involved panelists from China to Mexico. Media and non-media co-operation can also happen electronically. By involving experts in social-media and real time streaming, journalists are able to outsource some of the complicated technological work that has rarely been known as a hallmark of the profession, and provide an international audience with live exposure to an event. This also adds the opportunity for nimble commentary, a constantly updated stream of fact that can accompany live pictures on a screen. By allowing sources to speak directly for themselves (and directly to consumers) journalists are left free to provide context for readers and viewers. This would not replace the role of a journalist, since the legwork of locating sources, asking questions, providing background, and ensuring that consumers are presented with both sides would not change. Rather, it would allow us to do our jobs more thoroughly, by directly presenting sources on both sides to readers, and allowing them to decide for themselves.

Finally, the most contentious proposed collaboration. Bloggers and citizen journalists have gained an unsavory reputation, and those of renown have simply had the good or bad fortune to have been in the right place at the right time. The Tweets that tracked the raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound, and the American schoolteacher teaching in Japan at the time of the

earthquake are two of the foremost examples of private citizens drawn into the media vortex by their proximity to an event. While these sources are invaluable at the time of an event, when modern media may not have any way of immediately being on the scene, they should not be looked to as professional replacements for journalists. However, in the new era of internet media, journalists should become adept in the practice of linking. Many times blogs have become popular enough to gain a loyal following, and often for good reason. Blogs are the voices of the populace, and in the same way that letters to the editor are read and published, blogs can offer valuable opposition or reinforcement in a story. Linkages to blogs and other forms of citizen journalism can also increase traffic, advertising revenue, and community discussion. However, Journalists here must exercise caution. Blogs have been found to be the least trustworthy of reporting methods (Meyer). Linkages to and from blogs may be valuable for their timeliness or passionate opinions, but journalists must always be wary of citing them as valuable sources. Many critics of bloggers cite the tendency of inaccurate facts becoming accepted through widespread readership and re-quoting, so journalists must also be careful to accuracy checks the blogs they link to as well.

There are considerable ethical issues facing newsrooms hoping to change to a more cooperative form of reporting. Plagiarism does become more difficult to detect, and reliance on sources not trained in traditional news reporting may leave some media outlets vulnerable to disgruntled citizenry, or worse. However, the benefits of implement collaborative journalism far outweigh the risks. Plagiarism is a serious issue, but cooperation does diminish the attractiveness of it as an option for journalists who feel pressured by time or profit motives. By increasing the amount

of time journalists spend working together, the focus can be turned back to creating quality, error-free journalism that serves the readers instead of the writer. And though errors can be inadvertently multiplied through repetition as a result of collaborative journalism, there will also be more pairs of eyes reading through completed stories. Newsrooms may even be able to hire additional copy editors as a result of increased productivity and profits.

### Conclusion:

This project is significant as an in-depth analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of updating newsrooms to include cooperative reporting techniques. The practice can be implemented at a minimal cost to newsrooms, as the Internet allows for ultra-fast global communication at almost no cost. However, the financial aspects of cooperative journalism are difficult to gauge, as professional media organizations have been hesitant to pool their resources. As it now stands, collaborative journalism seems most viable at the university level, at least initially.

Organizations like the Knight Center are working closely with universities and spending millions of dollars to ensure that students are well-versed in both traditional news gathering practices and progressive collaboration techniques. These students can then move from their respective universities, where cooperation was encouraged and valued, to newsrooms that may still be resistant to new shared technologies and methods. While these traditional reporters are by no means obsolete, there will always be incalculable value in journalists who understand the traditional model; room must be made for progressives in a rapidly changing industry.

Journalism must become a more technologically adept and unselfish industry, as the old models where bylines are worn with pride and journalists jealously guard sources, does not fit on the

web world, where a consumer at any given time has access to millions of stories from thousands of organizations.

Working with global non-media professionals to widen the breadth and depth and reporting is a reporting tool that has been implemented already, but it should be continued and increased. By allowing sources to move from mere sound bites to solid pillars in a story, journalists can increase their own credibility as well as ensure that their stories are as informed as possible.

“Paneling” the news, or taking it from a cut-and-dry story published by a single organization to a global conversation, with informed background information and possible other perspectives being provided by reporters, does seem like the future of news reporting. There are very few truly domestic issues anymore, even national politics have become part of a larger global conversation, as they shape the way the United States is seen and interacts with other nations. No industry, including the news, can afford to be insular in this day and age.

At this point in time, this project recommends collaboration with blogs as supplementary. Citizen journalism may be valuable during certain events, where newsrooms are overwhelmed or international correspondents may not be reached, however, studies have repeatedly found blogs to be the least trustworthy way of disseminating news. Blogs are valuable supplements to stories, and can provide another perspective to any issue, but journalists and readers should be highly aware of the non-objective nature of these sources, and also be vigilant about accuracy checks while implementing them. Blogs and social media, however, are vital to furthering discussion about topics or stories, and they should be actively used as gauges of public opinion or concern.

In closing, newsrooms should acknowledge that the industry will not survive without implementing some form of journalistic cooperation. Whether this cooperation comes from the

next generation of journalism students or through changes made currently in established newsrooms, editors and managers alike must recognize the necessity of involving competitors, global professionals, students, and citizenry in today's media.

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