Shared Views:

Social Capital, Community Ties, and Instagram

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Prepared for the

Newspapers and Community Building Symposium

Phoenix, Arizona

September 2013

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Each day, millions of images are published through the still-growing photo-sharing social media network Instagram, the largest and most popular of its kind. In July, the service reported a level of 45 million posts attracting 1 billion likes each day (Instagram, 2013). It might be said that the images report pieces of our shared global reality from the perspectives of the people posting them (Wonders, 2012; Sontag, 2001). Some of the images show hard news – hurricane damage, likenesses of missing people, wildfire drama – and others are soft news in the extreme: cute puppies, fingernail art, and "selfies," the results of photographing one's self with a camera phone. Large news organizations have begun to use Instagram in ways that include crowdsourcing, curating user-generated content, branding, and reporting (Thiruvengadam, 2013; Mendolera, 2013).

Uniform responses from an informal survey of 40 U.S. community newspaper editors and sites representing diverse geographic areas and circulation sizes, however, suggested that Instagram was being overlooked as a resource by smaller organizations. Answers to questions about use ranged from "Huh?," to scoffing laughter, to "I hope to, but I'm not sure how" (email and personal communication, 2013). None of their newspapers were using it as of early July 2013, although that was not unusual as smaller organizations have been shown to lag larger ones in adoption of digital tools (Greer & Yan, 2011).

Social capital is a concept based on sharing, reciprocating, and being aware of one's community (Claridge, 2004). For decades, print newspaper readership has been positively correlated to civic engagement, a key expression of social capital,

because of the way it spreads awareness. Print circulation has been in a long and significant decline. The audience reading newspapers on mobile devices is growing quickly: up 58% in the average month in 2012 compared to 2011 (Hunt, 2013), and the mobile-exclusive audience grew 83% in 2012 from a year earlier (NAA.org, 2013). Mobile use is the only media platform not trending downward. "[T]he monthly newspaper mobile audience in total could, if it continues at a similar growth rate, surpass the audience for radio news/talk/information and all-news radio," a Newspaper Association of America report stated (p. 11).

Social media, key components of mobile use and increasingly important locii for news distribution (Hermida et al, 2012), are now associated with social capital. A 2013 Pew report found that "social media is becoming a feature of political and civic engagement" (Smith, 2013). On Instagram, there are numerous archives of images created to bring awareness to causes, from searches for missing people (#missingperson, #4sarai) to environmental responsibility (#environment, #sustainability). A lack of mobile-platform and social media presence on the part of community newspapers represents a reduced level of opportunity for building social capital for the good of both the news organization and the public.

What, then, are news organizations, doing with Instagram? In what ways do those projects or uses contribute to community engagement or knowledge? In the interest of providing models, this study presents mini-cases of such use, identifies aspects of particular interest with regard to social capital, and suggests a continuum of use from growing to mining Instagram content.

Literature Review

The concept of social capital can be broadly described: people who feel connected to each other are more likely to care about each other and their communities. It's posited that they will show their regard through helpful and nurturing actions, particularly civic engagement. Aspects of the concept have been interpreted narrowly as well, with numerous niche theories addressing particular uses (McCall, 2002). This paper adopts a broad view.

The idea that newspapers are tied to civic engagement goes back a long way (Tocqueville, 1945). Higher readership is taken as an indication of greater involvement as a citizen (McManamey, 2007). A recent study found that the closure of one small paper (circulation 27,000), *The Cincinnati Post*, had "a substantial and measurable impact on public life" (Schulhofer-Wohl&Garrido, 2013, p.61). No clear consensus arises from numerous wider-reaching studies using newspaper readership as a variable in determining civic participation; where declines are seen, it is unclear whether diminished newspaper access or coverage caused or was caused by a seemingly reduced civic or social interaction. The Schulhofer-Wohl & Garrido study, however, strongly suggests that access to community-intensive journalism is somehow connected to levels of social capital that are greater than would exist should those ties be removed.

One of the challenges faced by community newspapers is that they're being advised to create social media opportunities and aren't being told how (Schmeltzer, 2011). Once shown, however, the lessons appear to take hold (Schmeltzer, 2011; Hansen, Paul, DeFoster, Moore, 2011). If experience with locally-based electronic

forums holds true in their current expressions, active participation adds to and amplifies civic participation and elevates a sense of community attachment (Mesch & Talmud, 2010). There could be economic advantages involved as well. The ability to contribute to a news site, particularly with content submission, is one of the sole significant positive predictors of perceived satisfaction toward community news sites (Chung and Nah, 2009). Social media offerings that can be associated with publishing products increase probability of product purchase (Lis & Berz, 2011).

Making Connections

Journalists in the latter part of the 20th century became interested in the idea of social capital through the work of Robert Putnam and outspoken advocates of public journalism (Friedland et al, 1995; Kennedy, 2013), including scholar Jay Rosen and journalist Buzz Merritt (Thornton, 2009). Putnam, a political scientist, was concerned about what he described as a disappearance of "citizen engagement in community affairs" (Putnam, 1995a). He ascribed the phenomenon to diminished options for social connections, popularly described by him as "bowling alone" (1995b). Social engagement, no matter its nature, was seen as a glue for holding society together, giving people reasons and opportunities to care for and trust one another in reciprocal ways. Rosen suggested journalism could be a force in bringing people together again while reinvigorating – and partially re-conceptualizing – the news-gathering and –reporting process (Rosen, 1996). "[G]etting the separations right isn't the central problem," he wrote. "This is what public journalism is saying: getting the connections right is the deeper challenge in journalism right now" (p. 81).

Public journalism had a rough reception and gradually faded as a movement. "When the idea of public journalism began to be discussed broadly in the profession in the years after 1994, it was blindsided by the quintessentially modern American demand for instant results," Merritt wrote (1997, p. xii). But while the prevailing appearance was that journalists had largely rejected the ideas, acceptance had more to do with the type of journalist holding the opinion. Weaver and Wilhoit's 1992 study of American journalists found a small minority of "small-media, community-oriented idealists" (p. 146) who valued "connecting to the local communities and giving 'voice' to them" (p. 146). Voakes followed up on this. In a national survey in 1996, he discovered that journalists at smaller-circulation newspapers were more likely to find merit in the changes proposed by civic journalism. As one respondent wrote, "People no longer want to be merely observed. People want to be cared about" (Voakes, 1999, p. 766). The responses may have something to do with the practice of community journalism, which is more personal and engaged than the type of journalism practiced in large metropolitan areas (Lauterer, 2004; Reader & Hatcher, 2012).

The advocacy movement to build social capital through journalism predated a strong Internet presence in U.S. newsrooms (Ryfe, 2012). The advent of widespread Internet adoption and the popularity of social media have since spurred research on how those developments have affected public engagement. Putnam held that television and computer use splintered society (1995b), but the Internet, the network of networks, may have provided new opportunities for cohesion (Klein, 1999). A study of Facebook use among college students, for example, found a

positive correlation between intensity of use and four aspects of social capital: life

satisfaction, social trust, civic engagement, and political participation (Valenzuela,

Park & Lee, 2009). A study of Twitter use by mainstream journalists found that

regional and community journalists were more likely to be transparent about their

jobs, provide accountability, link to external Websites, and engage in discussion

through tweets than their national-level colleagues (Lasorsa et al., 2012), which

resonates with findings in the pre-Twitter Weaver & Wilhoit study (1992).

Instagram Adoption and Use

Facebook began in 2004; Twitter in 2006; Instagram in 2010. It was popular

from its launch, although it was restricted to iPhone and iPad users: "From 25,000

users in the first 24 hours, Instagram grew to 300,000 by Week 3, and then into the

tens of millions" (Sengupta et al., 2012). When Instagram extended operability to

Android in June 2012, it registered 1 million new users the first day. Three months

later (based on ComScore measurements), Instagram overtook Twitter in daily

mobile users for the first time. Technology reporter Mike Isaac wrote "That the

barely-two-year-old Instagram could rocket up in user engagement and retention in

such a short amount of time, eventually surpassing Twitter in the process, speaks to

the sheer momentum of the photo-sharing product" (2012, para 7). During that

time, Facebook, in April 2012, bought Instagram for $1 billion (Rusli, 2012). One of

the attractions of Instagram for Facebook was the photo-sharer's ability to interface

with other services. In a widely reported statement on his Facebook page, founder

Mark Zuckerberg vowed to retain Instagram users' ability to post to other social

networks ("Facebook buys," 2012).

As of July 2013, with 130 million active monthly users (according to figures posted on Instagram's site) and a reported 10% month-over-month growth rate (Isaac, 2013), Instagram is well-positioned, within trends of technology usage, to be on the same platforms as users and potential users. Scarborough metrics indicate the largest technological growth in the U. S. is in social media. Instagram wasn't included in the survey, but the number of people who had accessed Facebook "last month," when compared to the previous year, grew 13%, Twitter grew 43%. (SenseMaker, 2013, p. 11). Pew's Mobile Report, with figures compiled as of May 2012, shows that 91% of American adults have cell phones; 56% have smartphones; 28% of cell owners have an Android and 25% have an iPhone; 34% own a tablet computer, and 55% of all adult cell owners use the Internet on their mobile phones, nearly double what was found three years ago (Brenner, 2013). Of smartphone users at that time, 68% used social networking and 82% took pictures with the phones (ibid). Another study shows a sharp upswing in the use of smartphones and iPads, the devices on which Instagram works. Similarly, the number of people accessing news via those devices continues to grow (Smith, 2013). ComScore analysts used three years of statistics through May 2013 to show, in part, that the number of smartphone subscribers increased 99% over two years ago (Dediu, 2013). The organization's annual summary placed the U.S. in the "late majority" stage of adoption (Lipsman& Aquino, 2013, p. 7).

Digging into how people use digital images, a different Pew report found that "photos and videos have become key social currencies online" (Rainie, Brenner, Purcell, 2012). As of August 2012, nearly half of Internet users (46%) post original

photos and videos that they create; 41% said they curate photos and videos found elsewhere online and post them to image-sharing sites. More than half (56%) do one or both and 32% do both (Rainie et al., 2012, p. 2). At that time, 12% of online adults said they used Instagram and 66% used Facebook (p. 3). "The Internet has always been a platform for creators and curators," researcher Joanna Brenner said. "Now, as social media services continue to grow and expand, the tools are more visual and social, and that seems to be attracting special audiences of early adopters" (Smith, 2012).

A November-December 2012 Pew survey researching demographics of five major social media sites, found that Instagram use had risen to 13% with the highest use by females, blacks and Hispanics, people between the ages of 18 and 49, those with some college education, and urban residents. Although Instagram users were represented fairly evenly among household income levels, there were more users in the category for $75,000+ than in any of the other ranges (Duggan & Brenner, 2013, p.6). While "urban" was the category with the highest representation, combining the "suburban" and "rural" categories (p. 6), more closely mirroring the distinction between metro and community newspaper locations, eliminated an "urban" advantage.

From Poster to Viewers

Although an Instagram image may only be posted (published) from an iPhone, Android phone, or iPad, it can be viewed in numerous ways (viewers such as Webstagram and Instagram-hosted profiles, for example) on multiple platforms, including PC and Mac desktop and laptop computers, and can be distributed via

other social networks, including Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, and Facebook. The

process begins with an image imported into the Instagram app or taken with the

Instagram camera. Optional "filter" and border options are available to enhance the

photo, which is published in a square space. Comments may be added before and

after publication. Users may delete their own comments or comments left on their

feed. In the "share" step, options are offered for posting to Flickr, Facebook, Twitter,

Tumblr, and Foursquare, sending to email, adding an approximate latitude and

longitude via "photo map," and tagging people in photos with "Add People."

Instagram frames itself as a "community" and as such has terms of use that set

community standards and reserve the right to terminate the accounts of offenders

("Terms," 2013). Instagram provides a "Help Center" with tutorials ("Help," n.d.) and

a blog for updates.

The main organizing feature of Instagram is the hashtag (letters or numbers

preceded by #), which can only be effectively supplied by the poster. When viewing

the post, a finger tap or cursor click on the hashtag will call up the archive.

Instagram limits the number of hashtags that can be applied (to thirty); the

typographic device's main purpose is to direct publication of the image to a

searchable archive where it joins other images published with the same hashtag

("Instagram tips," n.d.). Hashtags are sometimes also used for social expression, as

in #greatvacation or #whenwillthisend.

Although the primary venue for Instagram and other cell-phone photos is

online, prominent news organizations have taken such images into print as well. In

March 2013, *The New York Times* published a front-page photograph, processed in

Instagram, of one of the New York Yankees. The photographer's team series was

licensed by Getty and published by *The Wall Street Journal* (Beaujon, 2013). In May

2013, the Poynter Institute published a primer for how newsrooms could use the

"community tool," stressing that Instagram "isn't just about pretty pictures. It's

about the people they're interacting with and the stories behind the images"

(Thiruvengadam, 2013, para 1). Some organizations use Instagram to drive traffic to

their main publications. For example, *The Chicago Sun-Times* reproduces its front

pages as Instagram posts (para 17), using them as both outreach and branding tools.

News organizations and photographers have voiced concern over copyright

violations arising from publicly shared images, a challenge that has begun to be

addressed by the use of watermarks and the creation of apps (many are available at

no or low cost) that make them easy to apply prior to posting (Laurent, 2013).

Instagram images are published in a low resolution that works well online but

produces print reproductions of poor quality. High-resolution versions, however,

are saved by the Instagram app to the poster's smartphone or iPad ("Photo saving,"

n.d.). This allows the photographer or news organization to retain control of

professional-quality prints, whether for additional publication or for sale.

Research Questions

Arguing that news organizations have both a vested and a civic interest in

building engagement and nurturing social capital, and given that social media is

effective in both regards, how might Instagram, a relatively new but increasingly

popular social network, be utilized in that regard? What are some examples of

Instagram integration by news organizations? What elements of engagement and

social capital are operationalized, and how?

Methodology

Brief, exploratory conversations, in email and in person, with more than 40

community journalists at newspapers of varying sizes under 50,000 circulation,

from major regions across the United States, took place in spring 2013. Many

expressed an interest in finding models of adaptable Instagram use. Through prior

knowledge, informed suggestions, and digital searches, and with the goal of

demonstrating diverse approaches, ten projects were purposively selected for close

examination from (or, in one case, related to) large-scale news organizations.

Screengrabs and pdf copies were made of all Instagram profiles, and archives were

made of Instagram feeds from mid-July 2013 and going backward to June 1, 2012

(or the entirety of the feed, if it was not that old).

The analysis drew on Instagram utilizations originating or referenced from

Chicago Tribune, Arizona Republic, Boston Globe, Wall Street Journal, New York

Times, USA Today, Time magazine, Dallas Morning News, and Washington Post

feeds. Images from The Virginian-Pilot were found through a geomap search (using

OnInstagram) as there wasn't a newspaper account.

 The projects were scrutinized to document elements of engagement and

nurture (through notes and screengrabs). Such indicators included, but were not

limited to, conversations; answers to requests; acknowledgement of filled requests;

ways provided for people to connect with each other, such as with hashtags; contact

information; opportunities to join in shared expressions or observances;

republished photos; transparent information about the poster or the organization;

ways people could interact as part of a community; and ways people could help or

serve a cause. These indicators could be present in the image, comments, hashtags,

number of "likes," and general tone of the post or the project. During the

identification and documentation process, emergent patterns were sought. Once

determined, they were further synthesized and used to give context to mini-studies

constructed from the selected news organizations.

Findings

Overall, there was variety and innovation in the projects. Some concentrated

efforts within Instagram itself, while others brought content found on or through

Instagram to print and online publications. Some organizations did both.

Most of the organizational accounts had relatively high numbers of posts,

while others had few (Table1). Time, with the highest viewership (427,127) had 603

posts and followed 80 accounts. Of the newspapers, the New York Times Fashion

account had the highest number of followers (331,521), 955 posts and the lowest

number of accounts it followed: 26 (there was no official account for The New York

Times overall). The least-followed account was the Boston Globe's with 604

followers. It had 9 posts, and 50 followed accounts. The second least followed was

AZCentral (for the Arizona Republic) with 1,394 accounts, 253 posts, and 139

accounts it followed. Those two organizations, however, demonstrate high levels of

engagement with the Instagram community in multiple ways.

There did not appear to be a clear connection between posts-follower-

following numbers and depth or range of engagement. AZCentral led the field in

terms of user-generated submissions with more than 15,000 entries to its ongoing

#AZ365 project. The next highest was the Chicago Tribune (7,264 followers, 358

posts, 399 followed) with more than 5,835 submissions to its #Trib2013 project. In

considering an organization's overall use, it became clear that one could

characterize its existing integrations as predominantly mining Instagram for

content or information to be used elsewhere, or as contributing to Instagram in

ways that helped the community there grow while also benefiting the organization's

print and online publications.

Elements of Engagement and Social Capital: Cohesion and Outreach

Nine elements of engagement related to social capital were identified and

each was categorized into one of two categories: cohesion (mutuality, reliability,

affability, and transparency) and outreach (reciprocity, amplification, extension,

information, mobilization, and validation).

Cohesion describes ways in which Instagram was used to bring and keep

people together by behaviors and actions of character and personality likely to

encourage ongoing and spontaneous interaction. Mutuality, here, refers to

establishing common ground between the organization and the viewer. This might

be a reference to a shared history (such as the *Dallas Morning News* posting an

Instagram photo of its front page report of President Kennedy's assassination), a

shared event (New Year's Eve), goal (raising money for bookbags), or sentiment

(support for hurricane victims). Reliability refers to ongoing approaches, accuracy,

constancy, familiarity, and presence – Instagram images might be sources of needed

information throughout the span of a tragedy, for example, becoming a counted-on

beacon, comforter, friend, and ally. Affability was seen as friendliness, neighborliness, or approachability. This might be conveyed in tone, in the use of the pronoun "our," or in a conversational approach in words accompanying or appearing in the image or comments. Posting photos of staff members and letting people know something about them would be instances of transparency, as would glimpses into the newsroom (a physical orientation) or the journalism process, and offering access with contact numbers, or Twitter and Instagram handles.

Outreach describes practices demonstrating a valued relationship with community members and the community at large, and a desire to enjoy that relationship with an increasing number of people. This can be encouraged through reciprocity (minding one's manners and remembering to give as well as take; conversing; thanking) and extension (going where the audience is, fostering creativity, broadening a conversation). Amplification (by showcasing submitted work or providing organizational hashtags, for example) increases viewership on the publisher's and the submitter's behalf. It also confers validation, a recognition of worth, appreciation, and support. Helping mobilize on behalf of a cause or activity could forge bonds of goodwill for the community's and organization's mutual benefit.

The elements were evident in varying degrees throughout the projects, which will be presented individually and, due to space limitations, briefly and with a minimum of context about the organization's overall use of Instagram.

Examples and Operationalization

@NYTFashion. This feed, dedicated to the fashion beat, reports visually on events, personalities, and styles, capturing excitement and atmosphere. It augments itself with hashtags to which anyone may post and uses the feed to invite submissions, using multiple hashtags so the post will be captured in multiple searches. As the New York Times had done with Hurricane Sandy (#NYTstorm – 3,471 posts) and the 2012 election (#NYTelection – 3,318 posts), the best photos submitted to #NYTfashion (2,237 posts) and #NYTfashionweek (31 posts) during Fashion Week were curated using Storify (a free social media tool), embedded as a multimedia showcase on the style section of nytimes.com ("Instagramming Fashion Week"), and profiled in the print Style section. #NYTfashion is where @Fergie (Instagram handle for celebrity singer/songwriter/designer Stacy Ann Ferguson, known as Fergie) posted a thank-you photo for a Sunday New York Times article (the photo was of the article) and where jewelry designer Nektar De Stagni posted glee over being reviewed in "On the Runway," a New York Times column (Blumenthal, 2013). That photo was of the print article, too. One Instagrammer blogged, "Instagram is incredible: How one of my images ended up on the New York Times website" (Fucci, 2013) and posted an image of that to the hashtag. Instagrammers posted star sightings, backstage scenes, street scenes, runway moments, and, predominantly, beautiful photos.

Also of interest, in addition to the front-page photos noted earlier: Lens photoblog featured the Instagram work of Ruddy Roye (@ruddyroye) in the multimedia gallery/story "Bringing invisible stories to Instagram followers" (Richardson, 2013). The Times occasionally offers a live feed of Instagram photos, as

it did for #NYTelection. The integration was featured on the Storify blog ("Election

Day, 2012).

      "Faces and voices of Bowdoin-Geneva" and #BostonSnap. These

integrations started with Snap, a program that pulls geotagged-Instagram photos

into a pool that can be viewed, archived, and used as a resource. The Lab projects

those images onto a wall (against a map that shows where they were taken) where

real-time submissions create a constantly changing reflection of the Boston area.

Reporters chose images from one neighborhood, then contacted and interviewed

the people who posted them. The result, 40 images and 40 stories recorded in audio

to go with them, as part of an in-depth multi-platform series, "68 Blocks: Life, Death,

Hope."

      The *Globe* also invites hashtagged submissions. To be considered for the

popular "Instagram Fashion" series, for example, one hashtags a photo on Instagram

to #BostonSnap (106 posts). Abigail Sterling (@thefablifeofanatchdisaster) sent in

seven, all showing her posing in different ensembles, between May 10 and June 12.

On June 16, she posted a photo of the resulting story as it appeared in the Sunday

paper, and wrote: "So incredibly lucky and excited to be featured in the Boston globe

this morning! And with SJP on the same page…what more could a girl want! Thanks

Boston globe! #bostonsnap #fashion #instagram #bostonglobe." Chelsea Quattrone

(@bootsachusetts) showed appreciation for her profile the same way. Stories in the

series also published on Boston.com.

      The @BostonGlobe account was an oddity. Despite substantive Instagram

integration by the news organization overall, the feed was essentially unused. It

contained only three news photos of Hurricane Sandy and six promotions for

"Style."

#Trib2013 and weekly themes. "Happy new year, everyone," the organizer

of @ChicagoTribune (Scott Kleinberg) wrote in an Instagram comment for a photo

showing "12:00" on a digital clock. The note continued:

> Let's ring it in with a new theme, appropriately called new. Anything
>
> that says new to you, from a baby to a flower to a sunrise at the end of
>
> the day. And instead of changing hashtags week to week, we'll stick
>
> with #trib2013 and hopefully have quite an amazing collection to
>
> show off when it's time to ring in 2014. And same as always, we might
>
> feature your photo in our feed.

The @ChicagoTribune feed showcases images from those sent to #Trib2013 (nearly

6,000). For the week starting July 1, 2013, with the theme of "USA," there were 158

entries. During the week, the Tribune reposted three of the photos along with

praise, thanks, and instructions for joining in. "To give you an idea of how popular the

themes are," Kleinberg posted July 8, "this week's theme, 'up,' was posted this morning

at about 9:30. By 11 a.m., we had well in excess of 50 photos." The themes, chosen to

release creativity rather than crowdsource content for an article, have themes that are

conceptual as well as directive. Healthy, down, fun, flowers, words, snacks, green, rain,

future, and colorful have all been used.

#AZ365 and a multi-platform approach: @azcentral. "Telling stories one

photo at a time," states its Instagram profile page, adding that the feed features

images from staff members of the *Arizona Republic*, 12 News, and azcentral.com. It

invites people to "join #AZ365 – an AZ pic a day for a year." People are encouraged

to use the hashtag on Twitter and Facebook, where photos may be posted to the

azcentral wall. The photos go into a daily slideshow, the link to which is tweeted.

TVNews12 monitors the photos and occasionally uses some in broadcasts. A daily

photo is chosen and posted on Facebook; at the end of the week, the photo with the

most likes is showcased on Instagram. An AZ365-themed slideshow also ran in the

tablet magazine, AZ.

Interaction is evident throughout. Staff and non-staff photographers are

praised, congratulated, credited, and reposted on the Instagram feed. When a staff

photographer (or any other staffer) has an Instagram or Twitter account, the handle

is given. Keri Hegre, who manages the account, frequently likes photos with or

without the #az365 hashtag, comments, and suggests photos that could be tagged to

the project. "Once people realized that azcentral was interacting," she wrote, "we

started getting tagged in photos to alert us to news tips." Among the news photos

that appeared both on the feed and on Twitter were five from the Yarnell, Arizona,

wildfire in which 19 "Hotshots" firefighters died. The "Tipsy Tow" text post, a

written note that appears as an image, runs during holidays offering help for those

who have imbibed and need a free ride. The account co-sponsored photowalks and

additional photo challenges for special events. Several times, contributors have been

thanked with special Instagram posts when submissions crossed points deemed

worthy of celebration: 3,000 in February and 9,000 in April. With nearly 16,000

submissions as of mid-July, the numbers attest to a solid engagement. In June,

azcentral launched a daily news update on Instagram. "Smart way to use ig,"

@shannonjhernandez commented. "#bravo."

@WSJ. The primary feed of the *Wall Street Journal* isn't @wallstreetjournal;

that handle's feed doesn't appear to have connections to the financial paper – a

possible branding lesson in managing one's name. WSJ is the designated acronym

and name on Instagram and elsewhere, showing up in social media feeds (Twitter,

Facebook, Pinterest), on WSJ Magazine in print and online, in the main Web address

(online.wsj.com) and leading off names of at least one auxiliary account

(@WSJspotlight) and numerous hashtags (examples: #WSJsoty, #WSJbfast)

intended for coverage and submissions. #WSJvote brought in 1,371 submissions,

some of which ended up in *Berlin Morganpost's*Storifycuration (along with some

from #NYTelection) of how the 2012 U.S. election was being documented via

cellphone cameras. The Journal used selected photos from the hashtag in its "Snap

Tweet Share" interactive map and slideshow.

@WSJ frequently asked for images to go with stories, such as the one about

#Selfies (252 posts). In another recognition of the place Instagram holds with many

of its readers, #photocritiqueWSJ was set up for those wanting advice from pros on

bettering their Instagram prowess. Nine hundred and two photos were posted;

selections were critiqued in a live video chat later made available to subscribers

along with a map-slideshow of the best. @WSJ is also, however, for news told

visually, and a collection of visually varied posts from seeming legal-pad notes to

showcases of winning reader photos. Its profile page invites people to send photos

to #WSJ, and 8,441 had as of July 22, 2013. It is a feed filled with conversational

posts, few of which garner more than about 20 likes, if that. In a post from

@julie_hanks, the photo shows a story on the *Journal*'s front page on which there's

been placed an arrow and text that says "GOT A SHOUTOUT IN TODAY'S WSJ!"

@WSJspotlight, a so-far small informal auxiliary feed, has the feel of a walk

around town, posting behind-the-scenes photos from social events, often sponsored

by the Journal.

@USAToday. Bright colors, faces (of humans and animals), promotions

featuring "USAToday" in bold print with or without the trademark blue circle, and

many photographs featuring circles reminiscent of the logo design: These are visual

characteristics of the @USAToday feed. An "I Voted!" design, used in print, online

and social media, reworked the company logo, effectively connecting civic duty with

the news company's brand. In 13 months of near-daily Instagram posts, only two

clearly telegraphed emotional distress. One showed firefighters (and you could not

see their faces) searching for victims and survivors of a fertilizer plant explosion.

The other was of a crying woman, on a phone, trying to get information about her

sister – a teacher in Newtown – after news of the shootings. Overwhelmingly, the

feed is engaging, with visual stories that are easy to relate to and "read," especially

in the size of an Instagram post on a mobile phone screen.

The use of hashtags shows an attempt to reach out. To promote submissions

to #mysuperfood (for Super Bowl Sunday), the tags were #superbowl, #sb47, and

#instafood – high traffic, non-branded terms guaranteeing high visibility for the

message. There were 62 entries. The #dadinoneword, for Fathers Day, brought in 35

entries. The submitted words were featured in a word-cloud design and posted on

Instagram. Additionally, 14 of the dad-photos submitted were showcased in a post that included them all. A slide show of 21 photos was published online.

An auxiliary account, @USATodaySports, had 958 posts, 6,098 followers, and followed 166. Its emphasis on action, triumph, bright color, and drama seemed consonant with its reporting beat, and there was a distinct absence of corporate branding, suggesting a different editor or strategy.

@Time: Happiness and a storm. Two Instagram integrations that resulted in cover stories (and an iPhone photo) for *Time* magazine came from very different perspectives. One, coverage of hurricane Sandy, was regional and specific (Wallace, 2012). The other was global and conceptual: how people all over the world define happiness (Kluger, 2013). On Instagram, the #TIMEhappiness request for submissions brought in 4,995. It yielded a multimedia feature (displayed Pinterest-style), "What happiness looks like on Instagram" ("TIMEhappiness, 2013), with nearly 100 of the submissions.

"Lessons from the storm," as the issue was titled on the cover, was photographed by five well-known photographers hired by Time as the storm developed. They were charged with capturing its approach, presence, and aftermath – with iPhones. Ninety-seven photos were posted on the @Time feed, updated as the images arrived, providing a visual narrative of the storm's progress as it unfolded and later serving as an archive.

The Instagram account, @Time, posts news photos, requests for hashtag submissions, and images of its covers. The "Happiness" cover drew 7,123 likes. Non-cover photos are popular as well. One, of a woman embracing her cat in the

aftermath of tornado devastation, drew 8,264 likes. During selected news events,

the number of posts increased, as it did during the Sandy coverage and, later, for a

February snowstorm in the New York area.

@DallasNews. The @DallasNews feed is a friendly feed. Viewers are

introduced to staffers, praised for their photos (which are reposted), shown around

the newsroom, reminded of important events like National Doughnut Day (and

urged to celebrate), and invited to join conversations taking place on Facebook.

There are lots of weather shots. Memorable images: the Southwest Airlines

executivebobblehead collection on a transportation reporter's desk, and a photo one

reporter took of baby birds, survivors of a storm, that she spotted on the way to

work. Conversations took place here. On July 19, 2013, Robert Wilonsky, a reporter,

posted a photo and news confirming a roller coaster death to his Facebook account.

The @DallasNews editor took a screen capture of the FB post and posted it to the

Instagram feed with two sentences explaining the news. The first reaction comment

was "Omg!" followed by nineteen other comments in which people tagged each

other, asked and answered questions, and generally had a discussion.

The tone of writing in the posts supported conviviality. One photo caption:

"Behold, the 24-hour cupcake ATM machine. Sprinkles Cupcakes opened the ATM

today at 4020 Villanova Road. #cupcakes #atm #dallas #yummy #treats." Likes:

240. Comments: 20, with 16 people tagged so that they would see it. There are

photo challenges: #DMNFourth (for the fourth of July) brought in 83 photos, and the

Dallas Morning News linked to all of them from a news page, and chose 10 for a

collage and story that ran in a "Stories of life in Dallas" section online. The News had

the only site on which its Instagram handle was listed in contact information and, when clicked, linked to the profile page.

@WashingtonPost. The Instagram profile page promises "the story behind our last photo" and links to an article and image; the content and link change as needed. In various ways, the theme of "story behind" plays out in the feed. Viewers are asked to "tell us a story" along with submitting a photo for #MyDadIs. "What kind of person is he? What has he taught you?" the promotion's comment asked. Responses were published on a Web page for Fathers Day. Four hundred thirteen posts came to the Instagram tag. While that was a good turnout, other hashtags fared less well: #DCflagstyle brought in 26, #mybestdeal had 16. The heartiest returns appear to come with news stories, as with #SandyDC's 1,255 (with #SandyVA and #SandyMD, another 610), and with general interest, ongoing tags, such as #WPsummer (723).

The *Post* uses submitted Instagram photos online and in print, as well. When @washingtonpost asked for submissions to #WPsnow, 702 Instagrammers liked the idea, and in the playful comments that ensued, someone tagged a photographer and urged her to send one in. A photo submitted by @sallymaxson was used for a summer promotion, but the @washingtonpost editor misspelled the name, correcting it in a comment. Instagrammer @worldismines pointed out that "the" had been spelled "thw," too. The response from @washingtonpost was "Yes – small smartphone keyboards, I tell you! Thanks for correcting." Three hundred and fifty nine people liked the photo. Or perhaps the exchange. Or both. The photos were published online on a dedicated page.

At *The Virginian-Pilot* and *The Virginian-Pilot* Library. This was a study of a newspaper without an Instagram feed. It was undertaken because there was, in effect, a feed-of-sorts *about* the *Pilot*, and it had intriguing examples of engagement. Many, not all, Instagram posts contain geographic data that search tools, such as OnInstagram, use to locate where the photo was taken. There, searching for the two locations in the sub-head, 88 photos were found. Five accounts were responsible for a large portion of the posts, but all the geotagged photos were examined. One Instagrammer, @bthnyb, it became clear, was a graphic artist at the newspaper. She posted beautiful, artistic photos of works in progress, from drawing board to published page. A librarian, @jakonhays, posted photos of an in-house book sale and tools of the trade. "POWERFILES!" he wrote on a photo of cardboard boxes in the Pilot's morgue, which he dubbed "The original search engine." Another photo carried this explanation: "Old pneumatic tubes that would carry messages from the newsroom to the presses. Sometimes a rat would be shipped in the capsules. Fun times for the recipient. #library #newspaper #EarlyInternet #journalist." Other posts were from several reporters, another artist, a photographer, an editor, and a sales representative. They posted such things as stories and pages from the Pilot, what was appearing on a newsroom TV, thriving desktop plants, photo shoots, PR kits, newsroom food, the editor's shoe, and a Foosball throwdown.

Discussion

Immersion in these varied projects yielded distinct impressions about each organization – each had a personality, in effect – that was tied to its seeming goals and approaches in using Instagram. Conversationally put, @azcentral was a place

nice to hang around. The feed had a "voice" that was friendly, talked to people, applauded and thanked them, valued their work, and tried new and helpful ways to relate, inform, and help while publishing beautiful, high-quality photographs that were timely and sometimes tied to breaking news. Engagement, judging by continually increased followers and contributors to #AZ365, was high. The *Boston Globe*, while attentive to Instagram, used it primarily as a rich pool for sources, stories, and content, rather than as an area within which to build community. Rather, it revealed aspects and members of the local Instagram community to *Boston Globe* and bostonglobe.com readers. *The New York Times* took both approaches: Through @NYTfashion, it cultivated an Instagram community that thrived on fashion while bringing those people to its print and online products. In its pages and sites, it conveyed a respect for Instagram as a photographic and publishing medium, showcasing professional work done with iPhones and distributed through Instagram. USA Today's account, which occasionally requested submissions, carried with it overtones of marketing that seemed less like transparency or appreciation than sales pitch. It did, however, provide some remarkable professional photos, clever graphic designs, and excellent examples of image use.

When the cohesion/outreach elements (that emerged in the coding) were identified in specific actions, as detailed in the mini-studies, there was a discernable range of approaches that went from "growing" to "mining" the community, with positive outcomes throughout. Some of the practices associated with growing were: investing resources in high quality content, visually and in text; interacting with

others through comments; following, liking, reposting, showcasing, and referring

people to contributors' accounts; and offering frequent Instagram chances for

involvement, such as through themed weekly hashtags. Holding, perhaps, a middle

ground of practice might be hiring photographers for special event coverage on

Instagram (making them more like visitors than residents), and incorporating

Instagram content into multi-platform features, although where that placed on a

growing/mining continuum would be dependent on context. Mining practices might

include solely using branded hashtags, which would likely only be seen on a

directed search, as opposed to tagging images to general hashtags, which would

increase the image's visibility. But mining could also refer to crowdsourcing, and

curation.

       Applicability. A partial goal of this study was to find models of Instagram

use that could be adapted by community newspapers. To that end, I offer an

example based on Twitter-Instagram integrations encouraged by many, if not all, of

the newspapers chosen for study. While none of the 40 small-circulation

newspapers contacted in the exploratory query had an Instagram account, several

maintained Twitter feeds that could easily be leveraged to include Instagram. The

Daily Courier in Prescott, Arizona, for example, was the closest community paper to

the Yarnell wildfire. At that time, it had an active Twitter feed (@theDailyCourier),

as did one of its photographers, Matt Hinshaw (@PrescottPhotog). Hinshaw used

Twitter to post photographs from the scene of the fire as well as to the memorial

services that followed. Those image-tweets were retweeted by @TheDailyCourier.

Had the original images gone from Instagram and been programmed (a single click

would do it) to publish on Twitter at the same time, thousands more people would

have seen them as they already included a hashtag. It would have been simple to

simultaneously include Facebook as well. That bare-bones use of the social media

tool would cost only time to set up the free account and seconds to direct Instagram

where to send the photograph with an accompanying comment. The photograph

need not have been taken with a smartphone; any image sent and downloaded to an

Android, iPhone or iPad could have been posted. Other examples, such as reposting,

showcasing, contacting posters for information, requesting submissions,

springboarding from Instagram to print and online, maintaining an active account,

and providing tie-in between social media tools, are easy to set up and maintain.

Limitations and future research. Instagram, as a relatively new tool, was

just beginning to be used by journalists, even at the largest organizations. This study

presents overviews that could easily be expanded to full case studies with their

relevance to building social capital more thoroughly examined. A growing/mining

continuum of practice is under construction as a result of this research. Intriguing

correlations between earlier work in public journalism might be made, comparing

what was done with the technological tools available then with the multiple digital

networking tools available on the Internet since the early 21st century.

Conclusion. Instagram, with its growing pool of people attracted by ease of

use, visual appeal, and vital social network, appears to be a tremendous potential

resource for journalists, especially in light of mobile communication trends. The low

cost of adoption is attractive. The availability of a variety of engagement models

might encourage community newspapers to find integrations suitable to their and

their communities' needs. The technology, while perhaps initially daunting for at

least two reasons – unfamiliarity and natural caution about joining an established

social milieu – is intuitive once demonstrated and experienced. The characteristics

of engaged Instagram use, as seen in these studies, are characteristics shared by

community journalism, which suggests a natural fit between the two.

Table 1
News Publications' Instagram Profiles by Account (July 18, 2013)

Instagram account	Posts	Followers	Following
@azcentral	253	1,394	159
@ChicagoTribune	358	7,264	399
@NYTfashion	955	331,521	26
@WashingtonPost	789	71,194	397
@WSJ	363	86,175	66
@Time	602	427,127	80
@DallasNews	338	3,802	316
@USAToday	445	31,640	2,417
@BostonGlobe	9	604	50

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